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LAURENS E. TACOMA

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FRAGILE HIERARCHIES

THE URBAN ELITES OF THIRD-CENTURY ROMAN EGYPT

BY

LAURENS E. TACOMA

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To George and Els Keet, best of parents

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PREFACE

This book is a slightly revised version of the dissertation which I defended at Leiden University, the Netherlands, in October 2003.[1] I would like to thank my teachers, colleagues, students and friends for offering helpful comments, constructive criticism and support—or at least amused tolerance of some of my wilder ideas. There are too many names to mention, but I would like to make an exception for Lily Knibbeler, not least because her contributions also extend to other areas of life. Her presence in my life forms a continuous source of love and inspiration. Our daughter Laura was born just in time to help during the completion of the manuscript. Any remaining typos are hers.

This book is dedicated to George and Els Keet, who know why.

[1] L.E. Tacoma, *Fragile Hierarchies. The Urban Elites of Third Century Roman Egypt* (diss. Leiden 2003). Revisions concern the correction of minor mistakes, the addition of some extra bibliography and papyological examples and the correction of the English (made possible by a grant of the *Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*). Further, an appendix on the Oxyrhynchite council has been added.

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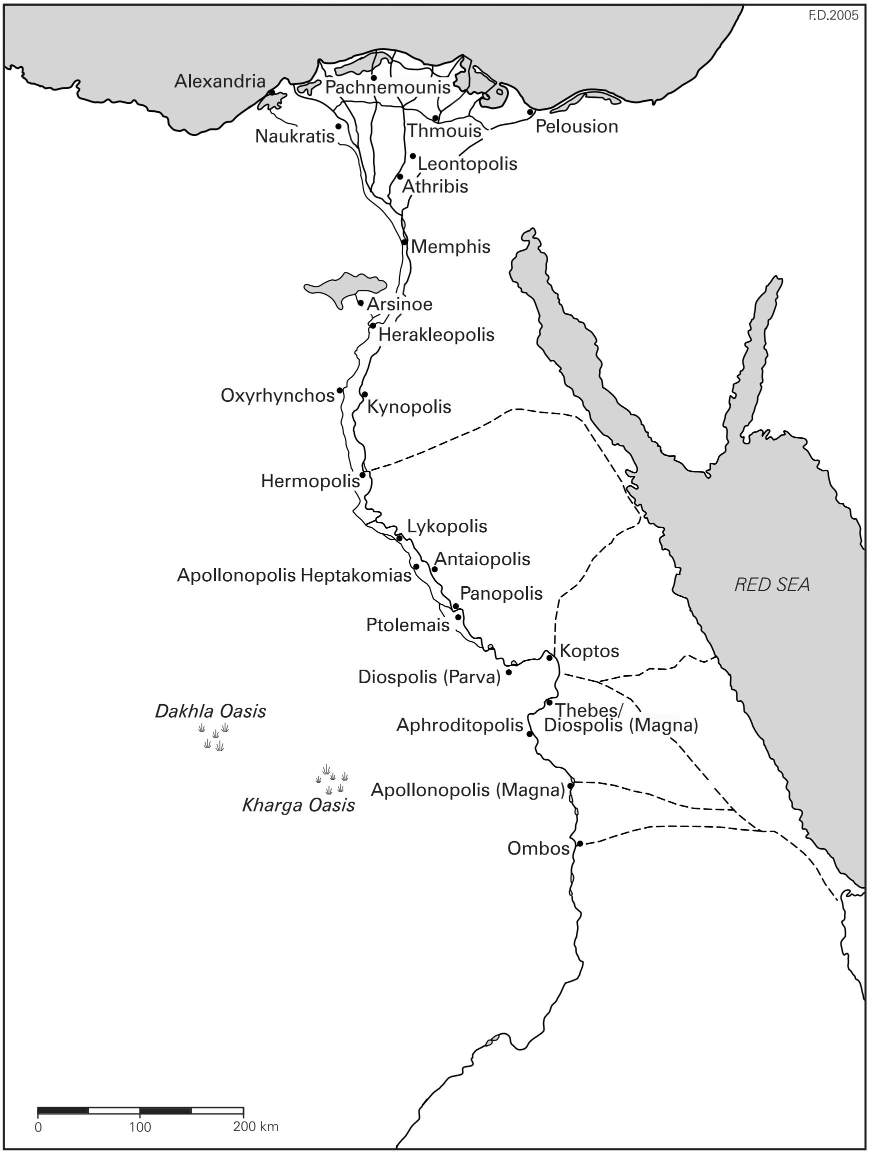
F.D.2005
Alexandria
Pachnemounis
Naukratis
Thmouis
Pelousion
Leontopolis
Athribis
Memphis
Arsinoe
Herakleopolis
Oxyrhynchos
Kynopolis
Hermopolis
Lykopolis
Antaiopolis
Apollonopolis Heptakomias
Panopolis
RED SEA
Ptolemais
Koptos
Diospolis (Parva)
Dakhla Oasis
Thebes/
Diospolis (Magna)
Aphroditopolis
Apollonopolis (Magna)
Kharga Oasis
Ombos
0
100
200 km

INTRODUCTION

AN URBAN WORLD

When, in 30 B.C., Octavian added Egypt to the long list of Roman acquisitions, the Romans acquired a civilisation with traditions reaching millennia back. In some respects the world which the Romans entered must have been desperately foreign, though fascinating and attractive. Pyramids, huge temple complexes, animal worship, Nile inundations: all formed a continuing source of wonder and amazement. Even by the middle of the fourth century Alexandria and Egypt could still be considered to be "in every respect an incomprehensible city and region".[1]

In other respects Egypt must have been quite familiar to the Romans. One aspect which must have been immediately recognisable was the organisation of communal life. Egypt was decidedly an urbanised society. Diodorus Siculus, writing at the end of the first century B.C., could describe Egypt as a society with 30,000 important villages and cities.[2] The numbers were numerical fantasy, but the suggestion was all too real. The banks of the Nile were dotted with villages and towns. A recent catalogue lists in one district alone, the Herakleopolite nome, hundreds of place-names attested in Greek papyri. Many of these will have been little more than hamlets, but the list suggests an intricate network of relations of varying size and importance.[3]

At the apex of the urban hierarchy stood Alexandria, by Egyptian standards a relative newcomer on the urban scene. In almost all respects Alexandria was a world apart, enormous in size, second in the Mediterranean only to Rome. Capital of Egypt from its foundation in 331 BC onwards, it was outward looking and cosmopolitan in character. All its glamour notwithstanding, for food and people Alexandria

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1 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 37.6.

2 Diod.Sic. 1.31.7-9; according to him there had been 18,000 before the Ptolemies.

3 Falivene (1998), though unfortunately no analysis is given by her.

remained highly dependent on its Egyptian hinterland, the *chora*.[4] In consequence, Alexandria functioned not only as a cultural model for the settlements in its hinterland, but it was tied to them through a network of economic, social and demographic relations. Boats travelled down the Nile, loaded with grain. People travelled to Alexandria, for business of various kinds. The Alexandrian elite owned estates in the *chora*. And so on.

Alexandria cast its shadow very far, but the rest of Egypt was by no means an undifferentiated rural lot. Most settlements had the status of village. Many of these were unpretentious affairs, with hardly more mudbrick houses than the number of letters of their names. Many of them are only known because their names have survived on a scrap of papyrus, or through the survival of their ruins, barely visible above the covering sands.[5] Other villages, however, were more substantial, comprising a couple of thousand inhabitants and having a much more urban feel.

There were also towns. These could be quite substantial and functioned as local capitals, exercising cultural, administrative and economic influence over the surrounding countryside and villages. These more substantial towns, usually located on the banks of the Nile, formed the backbone of the *chora*. If the Nile formed the spine of Egypt, these towns were the vertebrae. Since Pharaonic times their administrative status had been that of district capital, and since the Ptolemies they had been called *metropoleis*, 'mother cities'. They certainly were not *metropoleis* in our sense of the word—a designation much more appropriate for Alexandria, despite the fact that that city was in ancient terms a *polis*—, but they were urban centres of some substance nevertheless. The towns formed the seat of government of the *strategos*, the state official that supervised both the town and the surrounding district, the nome.

Traditionally there were 42 such nomes, 22 in Upper Egypt, 20 in Lower Egypt, each carrying a number.[6] In consequence there were

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[4] It is noteworthy how little this is realised in the scholarly literature, despite the highly critical comments by Finley (1985) 64 on Fraser (1972). Haas (1997) presents no progress in that respect.

[5] For an interesting and imaginative attempt to identify toponyms with archaeological sites in the Arsinoite nome, see Rathbone (1994).

[6] See Baines and Málek (1980) 14-15, who point out that the Upper Egyptian number of twenty-two nomes was fixed by the time of the fifth dynasty, whereas the Lower Egyptian number of twenty nomes became 'traditional' only by the Graeco-Roman period.

also 42 *metropoleis*. Through administrative redivisions the number of nomes and *metropoleis* increased in time. Nomes were split up or, less frequently, consolidated. Occasionally a town lost its status of *metropolis* to another settlement in the nome that had risen in importance. The situation was therefore slightly less stable than appears at first sight. Overall, however, the urban landscape remained remarkably similar for a long period of time. Most *metropoleis* had histories going centuries back.

Some of the *metropoleis* remained relatively small, only marginally different from the larger villages. More important *metropoleis* included Memphis, famous of old, Oxyrhynchos, Hermopolis and Arsinoe, the three best known *metropoleis* of Middle Egypt, and in Upper Egypt Panopolis, which would become an important scene for confrontations between pagan and Christian culture, and Koptos, an important entrepot for the Red Sea trade.

Outside the administrative structure of nomes and *metropoleis* there existed in Ptolemaic times three Greek cities, *poleis*, which each possessed some form of local government. Apart from Alexandria, these were the ancient Greek settlement of Naukratis, and the Ptolemaic settlement in Upper Egypt that was rather unimaginatively called Ptolemais. From a legal point of view, these *poleis* formed Greek islands in an otherwise Egyptian sea. They had their own constitutions, their own citizenship, and possessed—at least in principle[7]—a council and magistrates.

Cultural Urbanisation

The urban landscape of Egypt was not only rich in the variety of its settlements, it also presented many differences in the cultural sphere. There were marked differences in the degree to which settlements adhered to Egyptian culture or had adapted to Greek civic ideology. Religious sites with huge temple complexes and a thoroughly Egyptian population coexisted with Hellenised villages with a population of Greek settlers.

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[7] Alexandria lacked a council until 200; when and why it had been abolished remains controversial. See Delia (1991) 115-120, with bibliography cited there. N. Lewis, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 18 (1981) 78-80 discusses the possible absence of the council of Naukratis in the Roman period.

Hellenisation was a very pervasive force, however. One of the major features of Hellenisation was the distinct organisation of civic life. *Poleis* were central to Greek thought, and had remained so even when in the Hellenistic period larger states had been formed. The civic institutions of *poleis* comprised a system of usually annual magistracies, a council, an assembly of the people, the organisation of young men into groups of ephebes, and a *gerousia*, a council of elders. Almost as important was its civic ideology. By the Hellenistic period, cities were ruled by an oligarchic elite. The mighty and wealthy were supposed to spend money on their community either by voluntary benefactions or by the holding of costly magistracies, and usually by a combination of both.

Under the Ptolemies a process had started in Egypt of what Bowman and Rathbone have aptly called 'cultural urbanisation',[8] the spread of Greek urban culture and civic ideology over Alexandria and the *chora*. The creation and subsequent rise of Alexandria to a city of perhaps 500,000 inhabitants must have been the most dramatic and visible expression of the process. On a more modest scale, though no less important, the towns and villages of the *chora* grew in number and size. Simultaneously, the influence of Greek civic ideology on the organisation of communal life became more marked. Both aspects were best visible in the Fayum, where some newly created villages could boast a gymnasium and were built according to Greek town plans.

Under the Romans this process continued unabated. In the first two centuries the Romans added one new *polis* to the short list of Greek cities: Antinoopolis, founded in 130. More importantly, a trend towards local self-government coinciding with important socio-economic changes fostered the formation of local elites in the *metropoleis*. The most important of these socio-economic changes was the introduction of the concept of private property with regard to land. Already under the last Ptolemies some land had become private land in practice, but with the coming of the Romans this process accelerated. Over the course of the first four centuries, almost all land became *de facto* or *de jure* private and alienable. The increase in the amount of privately owned land stimulated the development of a more marked economic differentiation, which in turn fostered the formation of a socio-economic elite.

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[8] Bowman and Rathbone (1992) 109.

Though in a legal sense all the inhabitants of the *chora*, including the Hellenised inhabitants of the *metropoleis*, remained Egyptian, a three-fold status distinction was introduced, primarily expressed through fiscal privileges. The inhabitants of the *metropoleis*, the 'metropolites', were separated from the villagers, while within the group of metropolites a 'gymnasial class' was distinguished. Both metropolites and gymnasial class were closed and hereditary groups; the former defined by parentage, the latter, clearly construed as a more elitist group, by much longer descent groups.[9] The *metropoleis* were administered by magistrates under supervision of state officials, most notably the *strategos*. It is likely that the magistrates were recruited from the upper strata of the gymnasial class.

Right at the beginning of the third century town councils, *boulai*, were introduced, both in Alexandria, which had lacked such a council despite the fact that it was a *polis*, and in the *metropoleis*. The introduction of the councils formed no radical break with the past. There already existed an urban elite, consisting of magistrates, former magistrates and, more generally, of the wealthier parts of the gymnasial class. Rather, the creation of town councils formed the culmination of a gradual process towards local self-government and elite formation.[10] The introduction of the councils was not without consequences, however. In social terms the introduction meant a formal demarcation of the elite. Its members became, as councillors (*bouleutai*), a recognisable entity. The councils were composed of the most respectable and wealthiest adult males, who held membership for life. In administrative terms, the introduction of the councils meant greater local autonomy. The council now had a much greater say in the selection of magistrates. Though the *strategos* remained ultimately responsible, the council might in practice be defined as the body from whom and by whom the magistrates were selected. The urban elites thus became to play a pivotal role in the administration of the *metropoleis*.

However, the introduction of the councils came relatively late, perhaps too late. In the course of the next two centuries, from the introduction of the councils in 200 to the end of the fourth century, the councils became increasingly marginalised. As the papyri attest all

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[9] The best general introduction to social status in Roman Egypt is provided by Bowman (1996^2) 122-140; for the status declarations of the privileged groups see Nelson (1979) (though without historical analysis).

[10] So Bowman and Rathbone (1992).

too well, it was ever more difficult to find suitable candidates for office. Magistracies became less and less popular. Council debates were almost completely devoted to the recruitment of candidates. At the end of this process the council disappeared not altogether, but had lost greatly in importance. The fact that in the later sources the references to councils and councillors decline in number is no coincidence.

The trend can be traced through the terminological changes that occurred from the late third century onwards. The magistracies disappear one after another from the record.[11] The generic *arxas*, 'former magistrate', seems gradually to have come in their place.[12] The designation of councillor, *bouleutes*, was replaced by that of *politeuomenos*. Whether the two terms were fully equivalent is debated; so is the interpretation of the change.[13] At any rate, by the end of the fourth century such designations had lost much of their former status. The members of the elite found better venues for their ambitions. Large numbers joined the ranks of army, bureaucracy and clergy. Civic life changed fundamentally.

A Mixed Record

The urban culture of third-century Egypt thus presents a mixed record.[14] If ever there was a period in which Greco-Roman civic ideology flourished in Egypt, it was this. At the same time, there are many signs of problems in the *metropoleis*.

Undoubtedly the introduction of councils at the beginning of the third century gave a new boost to civic identity. Members of the elite seem to have embraced civic culture wholeheartedly. So did the general populace. Acclamations nicely demonstrate the nexus between Roman culture and civic ideology. At a festival in Oxyrhynchos, the people shouted in favour of the president of the town council. In one breath, they moved from the Roman power to the emperors, to their representatives who were visiting them (the governor and the *katholikos*), on to the president himself. "The power of the Romans forever,

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[11] Bagnall (1993) 59-60 for a brief overview of last attestations.

[12] Worp (1997).

[13] See Bowman (1971) 31, Geremek (1981), Laniado (1997), Worp (1999). For historical context see Laniado (2002).

[14] In a similar vein see the remarks of Bowman (2000) and esp. Alston (2002) 249-259.

lords Augusti, prosperous gouvernor! Prosperity to the *katholikos*! Hail to the president! Hail to the glory of the city! Hail to Dioskoros, first citizen!" The president was acclaimed in the best of civic traditions: 'Ocean!' 'Source of benefits!' 'Founder of the city!'[15]

Metropoleis competed with each other as vigorously as the cities elsewhere had done for centuries. They bore grandiose titles. Panopolis was 'shining, most famous, and most revered'. Herakleopolis was 'old and dear to the gods'. Hermopolis was 'great, old and shining', to which from 235 onwards 'most revered' was added. Oxyrhynchos changed its title from 'the city of the Oxyrhynchites' in 269 to 'the shining city of the Oxyrhynchites', which was only three years later extended to 'the shining and most shining city of the Oxyrhynchites'.[16] Merely to be shining apparently no longer sufficed.

The *metropoleis* and their elites spent money with a readiness that seems strange when it is realised that at the same time the empire was under severe strain. They built public buildings and initiated *grands travaux* on a lavish scale. More than 65 talents—at the time quite a substantial sum—were spent on reconstruction of the centre of Hermopolis,[17] according to one scholar part of a "*véritable folie du bâtiment*".[18]

Metropoleis instituted grandiose games for which they sought to attract outside participants.[19] Ephebic games were instituted in Oxyrhynchos in 202 and in Leontopolis in 220, both modelled after those of the Greek *polis* of Antinoopolis.[20] In 273 Capitolian games were hosted for the first time in Oxyrhynchos.[21] Members of the elite participated in the games that they had helped to institute. Agonistic culture was, after all, first and foremost elite culture; hence there is

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[15] *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 41 (ca 300) passim.

[16] See Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) s.v. and for Oxyrhynchos, D. Hagedorn, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 12 (1973) 277-292 and E.M. Crocholl, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 85 (1991) 268-270. The changes in titles have thus far only generated interested because they provide a helpful dating criterion for otherwise undated texts; cultural implications have been ignored, though cf. on a related phenomenon *C.P.R.* 23 (2002) 11 (222-234).

[17] Bailey (1990) for an overview of classical architecture in Roman Egypt, Bagnall (1993) 45-48 discusses the later period; both provide further bibliography.

[18] Jouguet (1911) 455-456, further discussed by Łukaszewicz (1986) 140-150.

[19] The best introduction to the rise of agonistic culture in Roman Egypt is formed by the collection of texts and commentaries assembled by Frisch (1986).

[20] *P.Oxy.* 4 (1904) 705 (after 202); *S.E.G.* 40 (1990) 1568 (220); see Rigsby (1977).

[21] *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 85 (273).

little surprise that elite competitors can be found disproportionately among the victors.[22] Conversely, talented inhabitants from the *metropoleis* travelled far and wide to participate in games outside Egypt.[23]

However, all was not well in the third-century *metropoleis*. The clearest sign of difficulty is that flight from office was extensive. Liturgies, compulsory services that extended to the whole populace, had for obvious reasons never been popular. They only brought work with them (or at the least imposed financial burdens) and conveyed no honours that could have made them more attractive. Flight from liturgies formed part and parcel of Egyptian society in the Roman period.

Magistracies formed a different category, however. They were reserved for the elite and *did* convey great honour. There can be no doubt that in principle the magistrates were chosen from among those of the elite who were considered the most respectable members of society. However, magistracies were increasingly equated with liturgies. They often became *de facto* compulsory,[24] and no doubt lost much of the honour they were supposed to convey. Reports of debates of the council show a persistent tendency of candidates to avoid office. Elite competition was in a very real sense negative competition: it centred on office avoidance, not on office-holding. As a consequence of the fact that magistracies became so unpopular, several strategies were employed. The burden of magistracies was often divided between several persons, the terms of office were increasingly shortened, and magistrates were also recruited from below the elite. At the end of the process, in the fourth century, magistracies disappeared one after the other.

But for the fact that councils were instituted relatively late in Roman Egypt, the picture is very similar to that elsewhere in the Roman

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[22] So in *S.E.G.* 40 (1990) 1568 (220). For individual examples of elite involvement see *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1697 (242) and *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261) (victors at the sacred ephebic games who are sons of councillors/magistrates); *P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1251 (252) (athlete as Antinoite citizen and councillor of Oxyrhynchos); prob. *P.Laur.* 3 (1979) 74 (late 3rd cent.) (victor at sacred and olympic games who might be the son of a member of the elite); *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 908 (199) (member of the Dionysion and the sacred club, victor at sacred games, exempt from taxation, gymnasiarch and eutheniarch; prob. related to a councillor in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1501 (212-269/270). Cf. also *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3135 (ca 273/274?) (gymnasiarch contracting a charioteer to drive his horses at the Capitolian games). For brief remarks on athletic privileges see Hagedorn (1979).

[23] For an example, see van Minnen (1989).

[24] See Lewis (1997^2) for first dates of evidence of compulsory assignment of specific magistracies.

Empire. The balance sheet of the cities outside Egypt was equally mixed. The decline of importance and concomitant change in the position of the elites also occurred in the fourth century. However, in their case it is well known that their problems had already existed and come into existence long before the third century. This suggests that in Egypt the problems were not created with the introduction of the councils in 200, but only became more visible.

The temptation to attribute the gradual erosion of civic life in Roman Egypt solely to the crisis of the third century should therefore be resisted. The chronology is far too difficult, for the problems are likely to have occurred both before the period of crisis[25] and certainly did not disappear thereafter. It can hardly be maintained that political life in the *metropoleis* was only under strain from A.D. 235 to A.D. 284.

Further, it remains unclear to what extent the crisis actually affected elites or urban life. The erosion of civic life was in the first place gradual, and certainly not a one-way process. As has already been stated, the balance is rather mixed. Under the microscope of the papyri, urban life shows Brownian movement, not outright disintegration. It is relatively easy to pick out individual pieces of evidence and interpret these as signs of crisis. The choice is arbitrary, however.[26] Against each indication of crisis a counterpart can be set showing the contrary. Each unwilling candidate for office can be paralleled with someone for whom office-holding formed no problem.

There can be no doubt that the empire was under severe strain in the third century. Invasions threatened on many borders. The imperial throne was almost continuously contested, and emperors changed with bewildering frequency. Economically, the empire was in disarray. No doubt the third-century crisis did not help to alleviate the problems of civic life. It was not the cause, however. The crisis was first and foremost a political crisis. It would certainly be rash to deny any effects on municipal life, though one could equally point out that the crisis did not stop grandiose building projects in the best tradition

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[25] It is noteworthy that *P.Ryl.* 2 (1915) 77 (192), the one surviving report of a meeting before the councils were instituted, presents a similar situation to that found in the reports of council debates.

[26] Likewise, attempts to differentiate between good and bad periods within the third century before Diocletian rest on arbitrary classification of historical facts and remain unconvincing. Contra the editorial comments in *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 66 (258).

of civic competition. Similarly, the difficulties of finding suitable candidates for office are likely to have been aggravated by the economic problems, but they are unlikely to have been caused by them. The chronology itself already suggests that the problems went deeper. The problems that can be seen in the third century occurred possibly earlier and certainly later, and occurred simultaneously with signs that suggest the ongoing vitality of civic life. Such a mixed record seems to have been a permanent characteristic of urban life, and seems to have been inherent in the way elites functioned. Urban culture was, it appears, rather fragile.

Delineating the Subject

It is worthwhile to study the fragility of urban life in detail. If problems were an inherent part of civic life and cannot be attributed to a third-century crisis, the consequence is that it is necessary to make an analysis of the position of the third-century elites. Structural properties should be analysed to understand the changes.

The aim of this book is to provide such an analysis. It is meant as a study of the position of the urban elites of the *metropoleis* of third-century Egypt. It offers an analysis of the fragility of that position by studying demographic, economic and social aspects of elite behaviour.

It might be useful, before we proceed, to define the subject further. The urban elites of the third-century *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt form the subject of this book. But how are the elites defined, what chronological boundaries are chosen, and how should we envisage the position of the *metropoleis* in the urban landscape?

The elites that are studied are those of the *metropoleis*, the district capitals of the nomes. This is not to suggest that there were no other elites in third-century Egypt. There certainly were. There was an Alexandrian elite, which, as we will see, in many respects functioned as a regional elite. There were the elites of the other Greek *poleis* apart from Alexandria. Villages could have elites as well. These different types of elites are discussed in this book whenever appropriate, but it would require separate studies to analyse their positions. Village elites lacked much of the institutions of the urban elites. In all probability the elites of the three Greek *poleis* apart from Alexandria had a profile similar to that of the elites of the *metropoleis*, but their institu-

tions show differences, also from each other.[27] The elite of Alexandria was in fact closely related to the elites of the *metropoleis*. However, the position of the Alexandrians should be studied in the context of the relations between Alexandria and its hinterland, a large subject that falls outside the scope of this book.

The fact that the elites are called 'urban' implies that the *metropoleis* are considered to be urban centres. In view of what has been stated about their position in Roman Egypt, this may seem obvious. It is worth noting, however, that by convention, the *metropoleis* are called towns, not cities. The term city remains reserved for the *poleis*. The distinction is based on constitutional criteria. The *poleis* would in modern parlance be considered to have had city rights, and hence to qualify as a city, whereas the *metropoleis* had no such rights. Although much of the distinction between the two types disappeared over time, the distinction has its uses and therefore will be retained in this book. There remained, after all, administrative differences.

However, the corollary of reserving the term 'city' to a limited number of settlements may seem to imply that the urban landscape of Roman Egypt consisted of four cities only: Alexandria, Naukratis, Antinoopolis and Ptolemais. From an economic and social point of view, this would be plain nonsense.[28] The *metropoleis* were as urban as any *polis*. For example, it is quite likely that for a long period of time the *metropolis* (town) Hermopolis was much more important than the newly-founded *polis* (city) of Antinoopolis that lay on the opposite side of the Nile. Oxyrhynchos could easily stand a comparison to any medium sized city of the Roman Empire. The fact that the *metropoleis* are called towns does not imply lack of urbanism.

The elites of the *metropoleis* formed a cohesive oligarchy, a ruling elite. For practical purposes, the elites are defined as the members of the councils and their families. This is a definition based on an institutional criterion. As we will see, the social and economic elite could be both larger and smaller. However, in the third-century council mem-

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[27] In fact, the *poleis* (and hence their elites) are usually studied separately from each other. See for Ptolemais Plaumann (1910), for Alexandria Delia (1991) and for Antinoopolis Kühn (1913); for Naukratis cf. Scholl (1997).

[28] Even as acute an observer as M.I. Finley was misled by the distinction, however. Finley (1985^2) 203 (*à propos* the corn-dole of Oxyrhynchos) seemed to have concluded that if the *metropoleis* lacked city status, they must have been villages, and hence were not worth his attention. In view of the immense amount of intellectual energy Finley devoted to defining the ancient city, the crudeness of the argument is perplexing.

bership formed the major expression of elite status. Councillorship therefore forms the best starting-point to define the urban elites, though it will become clear that qualifications should be made.

The period under scrutiny is the third century. The chronological starting point is obvious: it is formed by the institution of the town councils right at the beginning of the century. At the other end of the third century, the end-date is more open. Although important administrative changes occurred under Diocletian, his reign forms no obvious termination from the perspective of history of the urban elites. Conversely, there would in itself be little against continuing the study further, untill, say, 350. Indeed, occasionally fourth-century evidence is used in this book—mainly in cases where third-century evidence is lacking. However, this is a study about structure, not change. Any prolongation of the period under scrutiny would make the need to study changes more pressing. The profile of the fourth-century urban elites certainly differed from that of their third-century counterparts. The rise of Christianity and the changes in civic ideology that accompanied it are only the most obvious examples of the changes that should be taken into account if the period under scrutiny were extended. It is therefore better to concentrate on the third century, even in the absence of an obvious end date.

SETTING THE QUESTIONS

The questions addressed in this book revolve around two topics: hierarchy and mobility. On the one hand, elite formation is dependent on the possibilities for differentiation. To what extent did the third century offer possibilities to establish differences from the rest of the population? To what extent were differences within the elite created? On the other hand, hierarchies might not be fixed. Elite continuity and elite renewal should therefore be studied as well. What possibilities existed for third century elites for social reproduction?

In Part One of this book hierarchies are studied, mostly in a quantitative way. It opens with a quantitative model to understand the urbanisation of Roman Egypt. Next, it offers a model to understand estimates for urban population size. It is within this population, after all, that the elites were formed. Then, economic differentiation within the *metropoleis* is discussed, mainly with respect to landholding. Lastly, institutional elite formation is studied.

It will appear from these chapters that the possibilities for differentiation were large. Levels of urbanisation were high, there existed large differences in the size of *metropoleis* and differences in wealth could be quite substantial. Some members of the elite, then, stood at a far remove from the rest of the population, but elites themselves could also be highly stratified. There were also marked differences between the elites of the smaller and the larger *metropoleis*.

Part Two of the book addresses questions of elite renewal. Firstly, a theory of cyclical mobility is offered that provides the framework for the chapters that follow. Then, elite demography is discussed, especially with respect to the question to what extent the demographic regime of the elite differed from that of the rest of the population. Thirdly, elite practices of property devolution are discussed, as they played a very important role in elite continuity. Lastly, the possibilities for elite continuity and discontinuity are discussed.

What these chapters show is that the extent of elite continuity was limited. The population may have been highly stratified, and there may have existed sharp differences within the elite, yet the possibilities for elite families to perpetuate themselves in future generations and thereby consolidate their own position were restricted by high levels of mortality and patterns of property devolution. In most cases elite continuity remained an ideal.

The chapters in this book present a series of consecutive arguments. This book is therefore not meant as a comprehensive monograph of all aspects of the urban elites of the third-century *metropoleis*. Many subjects will remain outside the discussion, others are only briefly addressed. The arguments of the individual chapters can be taken separately: with a few exceptions, the arguments in one chapter do not depend on that of another chapter. Taken together, however, they offer a model to understand the fragile position of the urban elites.

Sources

The questions asked about the urban elites of Roman Egypt are general ones whose relevance remains not confined to specific Egyptian circumstances. The fact that the subjects addressed in this book have often been studied for other parts of the Roman Empire is hardly surprising. Cities and elites have always been considered of prime impor-

tance for the upkeep of the Roman empire. Indeed, the empire is usually seen as a conglomerate of cities tied together through the cooperation of the urban elites.

However, if the questions are general ones that could be posed for any part of the Roman Empire, it needs to be stated why they are addressed to Egyptian society. Why not study Germania, or, say, Syria?

The nature of the sources forms the most obvious reason for the choice of Roman Egypt. The papyri offer an unprecedented, and to some extent untapped source of information on urban life. Land registers, council meetings, contracts of sale, personal letters, business orders, declarations to state officials: all form unique documents hardly surviving from elsewhere in the Roman Empire. In Egypt, they survive in relatively high numbers.

It should be immediately conceded that other sources for Roman Egypt are much less abundant. The urban archaeology of Roman Egypt is still a somewhat neglected field, if only because in many cases modern cities occupy ancient sites.[29] Literary sources are confined to a handful of passages, written by outsiders, usually in amazement about some specific Egyptian peculiarity. The historical value of such passages is fairly limited. The epigraphic evidence is generally meagre. In clear contrast to other regions of the Roman Empire, there are relatively few inscriptions that can be ascribed to elite milieus with certainty. It is an interesting thought experiment to consider how Egypt would be regarded if the papyrological evidence had been lacking. Such an experiment may sound naive, but the implications would be stunning. The *metropoleis* would have hardly been known at all.

As with all types of sources, the papyri have their own problems. Notarial archives, property lists or tax receipts are bound to offer only a partial view of society. It is a fallacy to believe that the papyri offer direct and vivid access to real ancient people. Sometimes they do, but mostly they are stereotypical documents, written in clearly defined contexts according to specific standards. The finds of such documents are dispersed, and the data they contain are often highly disparate.

The major advantage of working with papyri is that they are to a large extent the product of the elites. There are few documents that are not somehow connected to their activities. The limited degree of

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[29] For overviews and further bibliography, Bagnall (1988), Bowman (1996^2) appendix 3; Bailey (1990); Alston (2001) for the later period.

literacy implies almost automatically that the papyrological universe is very much the world of the local elites. Usually, such a bias forms a major obstacle, but for this study it is an advantage.

The questions asked in this book are general ones, but the answers are sought in Egypt. Ultimately, the question remains how representative the papyri are for the rest of the Roman empire. This question is too large to answer here, for it would have to be answered for each subject separately. It would, for example, require a separate monograph to study patterns of property devolution in all the regions of the Roman empire outside Egypt. What can be stated in a more general sense is that the overtures in papyrology towards mainstream ancient history are both cause and consequence of the fact that the epistemological status of the Egyptian sources has shifted. Egypt is no longer seen as abnormal, as a region where people with funny names and scars on their body practice strange customs. Rather, Egypt is taken as a laboratory to test hypotheses where sources of other regions fail us. Whether the solutions apply in equal measure elsewhere remains for others to decide. Egypt might not provide definitive answers, but it is at least good to think with.

MODELS

It is because of the nature of its sources that the position of the urban elites is studied in Roman Egypt. That may seem to suggest that this book is a purely papyrological study, in which textual evidence takes pride of place and in which the papyri are studied one after another. This, however, will not be the case. As Marc Bloch wrote, "the knowledge of fragments, studied by turns, each for its own sake, will never produce the knowledge of the whole; it will not even produce that of the fragments themselves".[30] To which a statement of Rodney Needham can be added: "problems do not present themselves, they need to be conceived".[31] It simply will not do to take all papyri related to the urban elites and see where they lead us.

For a long time, papyrology has been a stronghold of intellectual positivism. It has also—and perhaps as a consequence—been an in-

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[30] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York 1954) 155, cited by Garnsey (1988) 18.

[31] R. Needham, cited (without further reference) by Hopkins (1978a) 180.

ward looking discipline, with a well-developed technical apparatus, but also rather inaccessible for "those who do not know letters". Thus, there are excellent editions of some of the key texts used in this book and excellent discussions of the institutional side of civic life.[32] However, many of the discussions remain confined to technical details, and there has been a reluctance to address questions of a larger nature.

This situation is rapidly changing. Over the last decades, several studies have appeared that try in one way or another to place the papyri in a broader setting. Many address questions that are also asked for other regions of the empire. Some of these studies are directly relevant for the topics discussed in this book. In fact, several of the chapters in this book simply could not have been written without their existence.[33]

Often, these studies use modelling techniques, and this book will be no exception. Not all chapters use such techniques to an equal degree. In some chapters it is attempted to make generalised statements about patterns, for example patterns of landholding, or patterns of elite formation. In others, more radical deductive approaches are used, for example in the study of urbanisation, and in the discussion of cyclical mobility. There are also cases in which existing models are applied to the elites, as in the chapter on demography.

Although models have gained a fairly wide acceptance in ancient history,[34] a short defence is still in order, as its acceptance is less wide-spread in papyrology. Models are not universally liked. One reason might be that there exists an implicit claim of intellectual superiority of deduction over induction. However, it is logically untenable that deductive models would present a better version of history than inductive research, nor is the gap between induction and deduction as unbridgeable as is sometimes claimed.

A second reason for the aversion may lie in what may be called the positivism of the models. The assumption inherent in model-building is that the historical universe is not only knowable, but also that it can be reduced, that it can be quantified, and that the propositions of the

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[32] Especially Preisigke (1903) and Jouguet (1911) are impressive, given the fairly limited amount of sources at their disposal at the time they wrote their monographs. Bowman (1971) remains the standard monograph on the town councils.

[33] I am thinking in particular of works by R.S. Bagnall, A.K. Bowman, D. Rathbone, and W. Scheidel.

[34] For definitions, discussions and defense of models, see Finley (1985) and several contributions by K. Hopkins, esp. Hopkins (1978a), (1980a), (1983b) and (1995/1996).

models can be tested. Both traditionalist ancient historians and post-modernists share the notion that reality cannot be known in that way. Either there exists no reality outside the sources, or the sources consist of multiple layers of reality which cannot be objectively interpreted.

It would be tedious to repeat the advantages of working with models. These are well known. It is more interesting to think how the objections can be accommodated. The division between deductive and inductive methods, which in ancient history has assumed the appearance of an unbridgeable gap, is largely artificial. The answer has to be sought in bridging the gap: in grounding models better in conventional historical discourse, in lessening their ambition, in limiting their scope, in using them to solve practical problems, and not creating tautological edifices that present a self-contained universe.

Models, it should be realised, have a scale. They could describe the taxes and trade of the whole Roman Empire, or the society of Pompeii, or anything in between.[35] In defence of large scale models, it has provocatively been stated that the wider the scope, the smaller the probability of error.[36] This is certainly correct, but every gain has its losses. Beyond a critical point, large-scale models become devoid of meaning. Large-scale models can be refreshing, but make statements on a level on which historians usually do not wish to argue. The choice of too small an entity, like a single city, would suffer from a lack of evidence and immediately run into the difficult question how representative that entity is. The possibility to make on the one hand generalised statements that are on the other hand sufficiently specific to describe the historical reality of that city in an accurate way remains limited. Finley's famous dictum that the study of individual cities is a *cul de sac* also applies to model-building. Large scale models make statements that find little application, whereas small-scale models run the risk of not being representative.

There is also the question of validation. Some models in ancient history have been created in an attempt to circumvent the constraints posed by the evidence. They were devised as a series of propositions, which could only be defeated by logic, not by sources. That is what has made them so forceful, but at the same time, it has also been their

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[35] For the taxes and trade model, see Hopkins (1980a), for Pompeii, Jongman (1988).

[36] Hopkins (1995/1996) 42.

weakness. Intuitively we feel uncomfortable about the epistemological status of our written sources. The models seem to laugh in the face of the whole corpus of ancient texts, which suddenly seems to lose its relevance. However, more important than to comfort our psychological needs, it is actually quite reasonable to demand that the models use more ancient evidence. Ideally, models should be verifiable and testable, and a major way to achieve that is by using data derived from ancient sources.

Regional models, by contrast, are more down to earth, have much less ambition, but also have a more direct bearing on the rest of our historiographical research. Roman Egypt forms in that respect an ideal testing ground. The area under consideration is relatively homogenous, so that there is no real objection to using the sources of all the *metropoleis* together. Egypt also offers at least a modicum of hard evidence of a type that is unique. The quantitative evidence is hardly without problems, but can be put into meaningful sequences. Papyrological evidence thus plays an important part in the model, though it should also be admitted that ultimately papyri cannot be used to test or independently verify the model. Roman Egypt does, however, offer an opportunity to build models that cannot be created for other regions of the Roman Empire. There is little reason not to use that opportunity.

PART ONE

HIERARCHIES

PART ONE CHAPTER ONE

POPULATION AND URBANISATION

Creating a Model

In Roman Egypt, urban elites were composed of wealthy, sometimes extremely wealthy, families of landowners who had a power and status that set them apart from the rest of the population. They derived their income from the rents of the peasants, or directly, from the produce of the land. The most important men among these landowners were politically active: they held important and costly magistracies, and, from the third-century onwards, had a seat in the town council.

All this is not only well known, it has also been well described. Indeed, the urban elites have been so well described that it does not seem possible to advance the discussion much further. New publications of texts may help to decide between competing explanations of our data, but are unlikely to alter the general picture. However, as was set out in the introduction to this book, there is a need to put the findings into perspective. There is a need to describe the position of the urban elites in an analytical and quantitative way. This can be done with the help of a model.

Such a model should meet several potentially conflicting conditions. A middle course should be steered between clarity and need for complexity. The model should neither be so crude as to appear detached from any recognisable historical reality nor be so complex as to be devoid of practical use. In the interest of transparency, it should not use too many variables and only use what is known or can be inferred, not what is completely out of reach. On the other hand, it should be capable of describing variety. The elites of individual *metropoleis* will remain out of reach, but the model should be able to make such distinctions in a theoretical manner.

The aim of this part of the book is to create such a model. For this purpose, it discusses a set of relatively simple parameters concerning levels of urbanisation, town size, distribution of income, and size of

the town councils. If, as was stated above, an urban elite consists of the wealthiest landowners of the population of a town, three variables are crucial: urban population size, distribution of wealth and elite size. For all these three variables, at least some data are known, while others can be inferred.

However, before we proceed the parameters need to be set, for it remains unsatisfactory to analyse relations between variables without any idea of context. It helps to have some idea of average levels of urbanisation, or of total population size. The following sections of this chapter aim to provide such a numerical context.

Number Games

Just as many other empires, the Roman Empire is an empire without figures. It hardly produced any statistics, and of those it did produce hardly any survive. Much of what passes as factual knowledge rests on convention. In a way, the absence of figures is a blessing, because it forces our attention on structure and prevents us from drowning in a sea of numerical detail. On the other hand, it must make our statements appear very crude to outsiders. For how could we claim the attention of our fellow historians when we have so little to offer? There remains a need to quantify what may appear unquantifiable at first sight.

Egypt has always formed a major playground in the numbers game about size and structure of the population of the Roman world. The reason for both the interest and the disagreements is not hard to find. The Egyptian evidence offers data that are specific enough to warrant close inspection but too fragmentary to legitimate an inductive approach. Compared to other regions of the Roman Empire, some of this evidence is of high quality, but from a truly comparative perspective the figures are as defective and disparate as all ancient data.

These shortcomings are most apparent in discussions of the size of the total population of Roman Egypt. The debate has been ferocious but remains unresolved.[1] Estimates of the population range from 3 to 8 million inhabitants. As the papyri are of no help, support has been sought in three other directions: figures found in ancient literary

[1] Rathbone (1990) is fundamental for what follows. See also Lo Cascio (1999), Bowman (2000) and Scheidel (2001b) 181-250.

sources, comparative evidence from nineteenth-century Egypt and calculations of carrying capacity. However, all three types of evidence have failed to narrow the choices.

The heart of the literary evidence is formed by two well-known passages, one by Diodorus Siculus, one by Flavius Josephus. The latter quotes a rather lengthy speech of king Agrippa II in 69 in which he tries to dissuade the Jews from revolting against the Romans. After many other conquered peoples have been upheld as fine examples of what may be called happy submission, he comes to Egypt, that, despite its large population, "does not disdain Roman rule". In half a sentence, he explains that Egypt has "seven and a half million of men, apart from those living in Alexandria, as may be estimated from the poll-tax revenue".[2] Diodorus Siculus, however, tells differently. "In ancient times," he relates, Egypt "had over eighteen thousand important villages and cities, as can be seen entered in their sacred records, while under Ptolemaios son of Lagos [323-283 B.C.] these were reckoned at over thirty thousand, this great number continuing down to our time [the first century B.C.]. The total population, they say, was of old around seven million, and in our times is not less than three million".[3]

With respect to Diodorus' figure of 3 million, editorial intervention has confused the issue.[4] In order to remove the conflict with Josephus' 7.5 million, many editors have emended Diodorus' "in our times not less than three million" to "in our times not less", that is to say, not less than the 7 million of ancient times. As editorial niceties are not everyone's cup of tea, the predictable result has been that many scholars have taken both passages to support each other. In consequence, the figure of 7 million has gained great credibility. Even as critical a scholar as A.H.M. Jones considered this the one reliable estimate for population size surviving from antiquity—in fact in the same lecture where he famously revealed "the ignominious truth, that there are no ancient statistics"![5]

In reality, there are two conflicting figures referring to roughly the same period. D. Rathbone has discussed the inadequacies of both at

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[2] Jos., *B.J.* 2.385.

[3] Diod.Sic. 1.31.7-9, some manuscripts having 3,000 villages. At 17.52.6 he cites Alexandria's free male population as 300,000; discussed by Delia (1988) 283-284.

[4] For what follows see Rathbone (1990) 103-107.

[5] Jones (1948) 10 (though Jones was careful enough to distinguish Josephus' from Diodorus' figure).

length. While doubt has been thrown on Josephus' figure of 7.5 million inhabitants, there is little reason to believe that Diodorus' figure of 3 million somehow provides a better alternative. Both passages show all the familiar defects. To begin with, the statements can hardly rest on personal observation but must go back to untraceable sources. Diodorus is not known for independent research, and it is in this case unclear what the source was for his statement that there were 3 million inhabitants. Agrippa's reference to the poll-tax revenue certainly makes no sense, for it was impractical if not plainly impossible to estimate population from revenue.[6] At best Agrippa or Josephus confused poll tax and census records. More likely, Agrippa's reference was a rhetorical device meant to add veracity, and nothing more.

Further, in both cases the figures are conventional and stylised, revolving around 3 and 7, and multiples of ten. There are far too many such figures in ancient literature not to arouse suspicion.[7] Both passages are biased, ideological representations of the past and form part of a much larger discourse about the role of Egypt in history. Numerical accuracy can hardly have been a serious aim of their writers. There is, in short, no reason to privilege the statements of either author.[8]

The use of comparative evidence from nineteenth-century Egypt is also difficult, though for different reasons. The society of Roman Egypt is sometimes compared to that of Egypt of the nineteenth century. Whereas it is obvious that in the latter period society and the economy experienced great changes due to the industrialisation of the

[6] Poll-tax was levied according to different rates in different nomes. Within each nome two different rates were used, one for the class of 'metropolites', roughly equivalent to citizens, and a higher one for all others. Even for a rough estimate, one would first need to know either the average rate for both classes (probably unknown) or all the rates of all 50 nomes (very cumbersome), and secondly at least have a general idea of levels of urbanisation. Further, poll-tax was levied on men only, and only from age 14 to age 65. Even if the number of taxpayers could be estimated from total revenue, one would still need to have recourse to a life table to estimate the relation of tax-paying males to the total population.

[7] Scheidel (1996b) provides a sobering corrective on the basis of quotations of monetary values in Roman literary sources.

[8] Likewise Frier (2001) 140-141. The conclusion of Rathbone (1990) 107 that Diodorus' own figures "are the only plausible figures for the population of Graeco-Roman Egypt in any ancient literary source" (107) does not follow from his own arguments. An unconvincing strategy is followed by Lo Cascio (1999), who accepts *both* passages, but considers Diodorus' estimate to refer to taxpaying males only. Ironically, it is Josephus, not Diodorus, who refers to men instead of persons, and who mentions the tax-records.

country, it is thought that in other respects both periods might have been similar. It might therefore be justified, so the argument goes, to take the size of the nineteenth-century population as an indication of the size of the Roman one. Only by that time had levels of population size been reached that are comparable to those of the Roman period.

The nineteenth-century data might therefore help to understand the Roman situation, but the—largely implicit—area of contention is which part of the nineteenth century Roman Egypt forms the appropriate comparandum.[9] No matter what the size of the Roman population is thought to be, the problem remains that in the nineteenth century Roman levels were as rapidly reached as they were surpassed. To determine where the legitimacy of the comparison begins and where it ends is a delicate balancing act on steeply rising curves. Neither is it clear whether it is legitimate to make the comparison in such a precise manner. Roman levels of urbanisation were probably higher than in the nineteenth century, but annual growth rates must have been much lower because of the mortality structure of the population. The choice of a comparandum is bound to remain arbitrary and therefore cannot be used to enhance credibility for any single estimate.

Lastly, the concept of carrying capacity has been invoked to defend estimates of population size.[10] It starts from the assumption that resources should be in balance with consumption. If resources can be estimated it is possible to determine a theoretical maximum population size. Calculations are expressed in wheat-equivalent: all figures for production and consumption are converted into their equivalent caloric value for wheat. If minimum consumption per person and maximum total production are known, the maximum total population that the land can sustain is easily calculated. Total production can be estimated by multiplying the available land with yields minus seeds. This figure is divided by the minimum estimate for the wheat equivalent that a human must consume to remain alive. Basic nutritional needs are fairly stable over the centuries; the main determinants are average bodyweight and height. Dividing production by consumption per person produces the maximum number of humans that can be fed

[9] For a very thorough discussion of the data of the nineteenth century, see Scheidel (2001b) 181-250.

[10] The most elaborate defense can be found in Sallares (1991) 73f. Frier (2001) places great trust on such calculations to estimate the size of the population of Roman Egypt and assumes overpopulation. Neither conclusion seems warranted.

from the land. When substantial imports are absent, this figure presents a maximum to population size.

For Roman Egypt conditions seem favourable. A trustworthy calculation of carrying capacity can be made, because both for yield and for cultivated land estimates are available. Substantial imports of food did not exist and import can therefore safely be ignored. However, and quite ironically, what calculations of carrying capacity have demonstrated is merely that high estimates of the size of the population are entirely plausible. The inhabited parts of Egypt were far too fruitful to impose meaningful limits on the estimates of total population size.

The complete equation may be formulated as follows:

$$\frac{Pr_{tot} - (F + E + T)}{C_{min}} = Pop$$

In which:

Pop	= the total population
Pr_{tot}	= total average annual production (after deduction of seed)
F	= animal fodder
E	= exports other than taxation
T	= taxation
C_{min}	= minimum annual consumption per person

Of these variables, levels of fodder, exports and taxation remain unknown. What can be done is to calculate total production and average consumption. The total agricultural production has been calculated by D. Rathbone as 81 million artabas (after deduction of seed) and average consumption at ca 8.3 artabas per person per year.[11] Dividing production by consumption, we obtain a figure of almost 10 million persons as a maximum size of the population of Roman Egypt. This outcome is remarkable. A maximum population size of 10 million persons is higher by 2 million persons than the highest estimate offered in the scholarly literature.

The actual size of the population must have been smaller, because fodder, taxation, and exports still have to be extracted. Instead of choosing arbitrary values, the calculation is more easily continued in

[11] Rathbone (1990) 108, followed by Bagnall and Frier (1994) 56; further Bowman (1996[2]) 238; Lo Cascio (1999); Said (1993) 209-210; Scheidel (2001b) 181-250.

terms of persons: both taxation and exports are ultimately used to feed humans, while the fodder (unlikely to be substantial) may also be turned into its equivalent human consumption. At a deliberately rather generous guess, we could perhaps say that fodder was equivalent to the food of 0.5 million persons at the most. That means that even if the Egyptian population consisted of 8 million persons, another 1.5 million persons outside Egypt could still be fed from its exports and taxes. This figure is huge: it accommodates the whole population of Rome, plus the whole of the Roman army, and still leaves a substantial amount of grain unconsumed.

The conclusion should not be that the calculation proves that the population of Roman Egypt must have been in the order of the higher figure of 8 million people; nor does the calculation even suggest as much. Carrying capacity only gives a theoretical maximum. It is possible to change the values of the variables: more realistic levels of average consumption might be used, well above subsistence-level; the amount of cultivated land might be decreased with real plausibility; yields may be lowered, though with less plausibility. However, that is beside the point.[12] It is not the actual figures that matter, but the logic. What the calculation demonstrates is that we need not transgress our conventional knowledge to defend a high population size. Whether we like it or not, in terms of carrying capacity, a population size of 8 million is entirely reasonable.

This is some advancement. Calculations like these, however, involve too many uncertainties and leave too wide margins to be of any real use. Whether carrying capacity is as useful a concept as it has been taken to be is a question that exceeds the limit of this discussion. At any rate, in the case of Roman Egypt the equation fails to do what it was invoked for: to eliminate the higher estimates. Estimating carrying capacity seems only to be useful in cases where no further information is available at all, and where wilder flights of numerical fancy need to be kept in check. Such is clearly not the case in Egypt.

All three approaches seem to lead into blind alleys. The literary traditions conflict and do not inspire confidence. Comparative evidence does not really help, because the legitimacy of the comparison

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[12] Rathbone arrives ultimately at a maximum population size of 5 million. Although this figure is certainly not unrealistic, it is based on arbitrary subtractions, which are unlikely to convince those who want to argue a higher figure.

is in doubt. Carrying capacity imposes upper limits that are even above the highest conventional estimates.

So we should retrace our steps and rethink our approaches. Instead of producing yet another set of slightly different estimates, it better be accepted that the debate cannot be solved in this way. A different strategy has to be followed. Once we liberate ourselves from the fixation on isolated figures, it is possible to turn the epistemological aporia to our benefit.

As a first step, there is one conclusion that can be drawn from the debate. Despite the fact that it is impossible to determine what figures should be chosen exactly, it is noteworthy that all three types of approaches point to the same broad band of probabilities. The figures of 3 million and 8 million roughly form the boundaries of what convention deems possible. Whether this is coincidence or not does not matter much. In this case circularity is a benefit. Fact, tradition, convention and knowledge seem to be inextricably intertwined, and we should be grateful that there is no need to separate them.

As a second step, we should realise that the available figures do not have meaning in isolation, but should be placed in a framework.[13] In the absence of precise figures, population size can best be regarded as just one variable among a set of interdependent variables, such as population density, levels of urbanisation, and inhabited area. For each of these variables it can equally be argued that they have no meaning in isolation. Nor are any of these known exactly, let alone at any specific moment in time. Because of that, it is better to study their interdependency by formulating equations. These are not designed to obtain precise figures, but to delineate a spectrum of possibilities.

In what follows, the aim is to provide such a framework and explore the implications of our conventions about Roman Egypt's population. Based on a definition of urbanisation, an equation will be formulated that sketches the relation between several variables. For each of these, high and low estimates will be used. These are not meant to describe the situation in the third century (or any other specific period) in an exact manner. The equation operates in theory in a timeless universe, though for practical purposes, the variables will be chosen to describe the first four centuries.

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[13] See Sallares (1991) 48 for an argument that studies of size alone are not very helpful.

The Parameters of the Possible

The level of urbanisation can be defined as the proportion of the total population that is living in urban centres. This definition can be expressed as a general equation and in a form applied to Roman Egypt:

$$\frac{\text{Urban population}}{\text{Total population}} * 100 = \text{Urbanisation in \%}$$

$$\frac{S_{Alex} + (N_{tot} * S_{av})}{A_{inh} * D_{pop}} * 100 = U$$

In which:
S_{Alex} = the population size of Alexandria, in pers.
N_{tot} = the total number of urban centres, excluding Alexandria
S_{av} = the average population size of the urban centres, in pers.
A_{inh} = the inhabited area, in km^2
D_{pop} = the total population density, in pers./km^2
U = the resulting level of urbanisation, expressed as a percentage

The equation is not primarily designed to offer a full description of urbanisation, but to lay bare some of the quantitative properties of Roman Egypt's population. Nevertheless, for cross-cultural comparisons of levels of urbanisation it is important to keep in mind the character of the definition. The definition of urbanisation that is used here is non-economic in that it ignores occupation. There is a possibility that some urban dwellers might have had non-urban occupations: they might have been working as farmers on the lands surrounding the town. Such urban farmers would ideally be excluded from the urban inhabitants—although in practice this is usually difficult to achieve. Further, and more importantly, what counts as 'urban centre' is not determined by economic complexity or size or historical importance but by administrative criteria.[14] Here it will be assumed that the category of urban centres consists of all towns (*metropoleis*) and the few Greek cities (*poleis*) except Alexandria. This has great practical ad-

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[14] For criteria based on size, not administrative status, see the discussion in de Vries (1984) 10-13 and 21-22 and, for Roman Egypt, using multiple criteria, Alston and Alston (1997).

vantages because it obviates the need to determine for each individual settlement its true status. However, it needs to be realised that in theory some towns included in the category of urban settlements might have been rustic backwaters, while some villages that are not reckoned to be urban might have reached the size of small towns. The problem will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The use of such an equation has at least one advantage. As it is the broad band of possibilities, not the exact figures, that needs to be established, there is no need to discuss in detail all the difficulties that individual estimates present. The discussion of the population size of Alexandria, for example, forms a minefield of problematical passages and hypothetical inferences. For the equation, it simply suffices to take the lowest and the highest estimates that have been offered in the literature and explore the plausibility of their results.

Admittedly, such a procedure also creates new problems. For on what external grounds can it be determined where plausibility ends? Comparative data might suggest in some cases that the estimates are relatively high, or relatively low, but whether this means that they are *too* high, or *too* low, is in most cases impossible to tell. The cutting-off points at either side are in fact part of a spectrum of decreasing and increasing probability. Here the more extreme suggestions are eliminated, but it remains free for anyone to test their plausibility with the help of the equation.

Next, figures can be put to the equation. With respect to the size of the population of Alexandria, S_{Alex}, it has been argued that the maximum size of its population cannot have exceeded 600,000 inhabitants.[15] This is high, and remains no more than an educated guess, but it serves well as a maximum estimate. A minimum size may be set, somewhat arbitrarily though certainly not implausibly, at 200,000 inhabitants.[16] One could perhaps enlist the support of comparative evidence to suggest similar boundaries. On the one hand, in modern times Alexandria itself only passed the 300,000 mark at the end of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, the population of Cairo and Alexandria combined had reached the 600,000 mark in 1882, roughly around the time when the comparison with Roman Egypt is believed to become devoid of meaning.[17] Whether such a comparison is really

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[15] Delia (1988) 290 for a maximum of 500,000-600,000.
[16] Haas (1997) 46: at least 200,000 inhabitants in Late Antiquity.
[17] According to modern estimates, Alexandria had 12,528 inhabitants (sic!) in

meaningful remains open to question, but it is comforting that the figures are broadly similar to those used for the Roman period.

The number of towns, N_{tot}, is relatively unproblematic to determine, because in the definition used here it is almost exactly the same as the number of nomes, plus the few *poleis* that were not district capitals. The minimum number of districts can be set at 40. In Roman times this number may have risen to 50, or perhaps even more.[18]

For the average size of these 40 to 50 towns, S_{av}, the estimates that have been given range from 15,000 to 25,000 inhabitants.[19] These estimates are based on figures of population size of some individual *metropoleis* which will be discussed in Part One Chapter Two. From a comparative perspective this range is high. In part, this is a consequence of the definition of urban settlements. By taking into account *metropoleis* and *poleis* only, the definition excludes many of the smaller settlements which in other provinces of the Roman empire would be regarded as urban centres. The estimated average urban population size for Roman Egypt is therefore relatively high. However, average town size is also high in comparison to later periods of Egyptian history. In nineteenth-century Egypt average town size might have been lower, though a precise comparison is impossible to make due to a lack of data.[20] Whether this implies that Roman Egypt was indeed exceptional or that the maximum estimate is in need of further correction is impossible to say at this point. With regard to the estimates for population size it has already been stated that the comparison is to some extent arbitrary. It seems therefore safer to refrain from further downscaling and leave the average urban population size at 15,000 to 25,000 inhabitants. With 40 to 50 towns the total urban

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1821-26; 164,359 in 1846; 231,396 in 1882 and 332,247 in 1907 (Baer (1969)). See further Scheidel (2001b) 201-208.

[18] I follow Bagnall and Frier (1994) 55, who refer to a forthcoming study of nome coins by J.A. Sheridan. The short catalogue of nome coins in Bernand e.a. (1997) 72-97 nos 54-103 presents coins from 49 different nomes, though not all of them at exactly the same time. The *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1996[3]) s.v. nomes states without further reference that by the third century the number was almost 60.

[19] In ascending order: Rathbone (1990) 121, 15,000; Bagnall (1993) 53, 16,000; Krüger (1990) 38, 15,000-20,000; Bagnall and Frier (1994) 55, 25,000.

[20] The average size of a limited number of larger cities (Cairo and Alexandria excluded) can be calculated from Baer (1969) table 2. 1821-6: 11,800 (N =7). 1846: 14,900 (N = 10); 1882: 20,100 (N = 19). 1897: 26,900 (N = 21). 1907: 29,034 (N = 21). Thus, the higher levels postulated for Roman times were only reached at the very end of the nineteenth century. As the figures concern only the larger towns, the averages would drop considerably if more towns were included.

population outside Alexandria would be in the range of 600,000 to 1,250,000 persons.

The total inhabited area, A_{inh}, is usually estimated at 25,000 km^2. This might well be too high.[21] The reported figures for the nineteenth century range from ca 13,000 km^2 in 1813 to 20,000 km^2 from 1880 onwards. These figures concern cultivated, not inhabited land, and considerable underreporting might have occurred especially in the earlier years. Despite the reservations voiced about the appropriateness of a precise comparison, they could in a more general sense imply that the estimates for the Roman period should be lowered. Further, roughly the same range can be found through extrapolation of the sizes of the districts (nomes) of Roman Egypt. The average size of 23 nomes south of the Delta was 365 km^2; if this figure can be applied to all nomes, the total inhabited area was ca 14,600 km^2 to 18,250 km^2, depending on the number of nomes.[22] It should be emphasised that as little is known about the Delta, this calculation derives its legitimacy from the consistency of the results, not the other way around. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to use a relatively low figure of 15,000 km^2 as a minimum figure for the inhabited area, and to use the 25,000 km^2 as a maximum estimate.

Next the population density, D_{pop}, where a somewhat different strategy has to be followed. The nineteenth-century data display two characteristics: they were very high and they remained relatively stable, despite the rapid growth of the population.[23] Increases in the size of the population were met by increases in the cultivated land, not, or much less so, by increases in population density. If it is legitimate to apply nineteenth-century principles to the Roman period, it follows that the lowest figure for inhabited area should be coupled with the lowest population size, and the highest with the highest population size. With the figures offered above for inhabited area, and a minimum population of 3 million and a maximum population of 8 million, this leads to a population density of 200 to 320 pers/km^2. This range is high in comparison with other densely populated parts of the Ro-

[21] I follow Scheidel (2001b) 220-223, who also provides the figures for the nineteenth century. For the 25,000 km^2, see Schlott (1981) 137f.

[22] Calculated from Bagnall (1993) app. 3. Note that the calculated average is slightly higher in Part One Chapter Two Table 1.2.1 because of the exclusion of some smaller nomes.

[23] As can be learned from comparing Scheidel (2001b) table 3.4 (population size) with table 3.5 (reported cultivated area).

man Empire and with other pre-industrial societies, but probably falls short of the figures available for nineteenth-century Egypt.[24]

Lastly, urbanisation. Surprisingly enough, levels of urbanisation have been little debated, despite the importance of the subject for the Roman Empire as a whole.[25] The figures that have been advanced range from 20-25%, to 30%, and even to 33-37%.[26] It seems safer to limit the range to 20-30%, and exclude the higher estimates. Levels of urbanisation were undoubtedly high in Roman Egypt, but a level of 33% or higher seems implausible.[27] Comparative data show that the range of 20% to 30% is already very high. Firstly, in early modern Europe, even the most heavily urbanised regions never reached levels of 20%.[28] Secondly, in Roman Italy urbanisation may admittedly have reached a level of 40%, but this level can only be obtained by including in the count the ca 400 minor cities of 1,000-5,000 inhabitants each, settlements which in Roman Egypt would certainly count as villages. If these are excluded from the comparison the level of urbanisation drops to 25%.[29] Lowering the estimates for Roman Egypt to 20-30% is certainly warranted.

To sum up, the range of possibilities is as follows:

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[24] For comparanda, see e.g. Garnsey (1988) table 4 and Sallares (1991) 73 on ancient and modern Greece. Population density of the major European countries in the mid-eighteenth century was in the order of magnitude of 40-60 pers/km^2; see Livi-Bacci (2001^3) 59.

[25] Though see Bowman (2000), whose survey covers much of the ground covered here.

[26] Rathbone (1990) 121, Bagnall (1993) 312, Bagnall and Frier (1994) 56, respectively. Some of the figures are only implied, not given. The difference between the estimate of Bagnall (1993) and Bagnall and Frier (1994) might perhaps be explained by the fact that the estimate in Bagnall (1993) concerns a slightly later period.

[27] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 56 duly noted that a level of urbanisation of 37% was "high even by the standards of the Roman Empire, the most urbanized state of the Western world before modern times", and lowered it to 33%, a figure undoubtedly chosen for computational ease in the weighing of the village and town declarations of the census. Further discomfort is voiced in Frier (2001). Although this is unlikely to change their general conclusions, it should be pointed out that a lower level of urbanisation leads to a different weighing of village versus metropolis returns in the analysis of the census documents.

[28] De Vries (1984) table 3.7 and table 3.8. De Vries' definition of 'city' is based on population size (10,000+ inhabitants), not on administrative criteria, but most if not all of the towns of Roman Egypt will have met that criterion. It has been pointed out that the regional rates of urbanisation remain remarkably stable over the centuries.

[29] As set out by Morley (1996) 181-183.

S_{Alex}	= 200,000-600,000 inhabitants
N_{tot}	= 40-50 towns
S_{av}	= 15,000-25,000 inhabitants
A_{inh}	= 15,000-25,000 km^2
D_{pop}	= 200-320 pers./km^2
U	= 20-30%

USING THE EQUATION

How to use the equation? First of all, we should check whether the individual minimum and maximum estimates produce a realistic outcome. As a test, we can take the level of urbanisation as unknown and fill in maximum and minimum estimates. A calculation that uses maximum figures, based on a population of 8 million, a size of Alexandria of 600,000 inhabitants, 50 towns and an average town size of 25,000 inhabitants, leads to a level of urbanisation of 23%. A calculation with minimum figures, based on a population of 3 million, a size of Alexandria of 200,000 inhabitants, 40 towns, and an average town size of 15,000 inhabitants leads to a level of urbanisation of 26%. Thus, both calculations yield levels of urbanisation that remain within the estimated range of 20%-30%.

These calculations also demonstrate how the equation works. In the first equation the size of Alexandria and the towns is already at its peak, so if we consider the level of urbanisation somewhat too low, the best strategy is to lower the size of the total population. In the second equation the size of Alexandria and the towns is at its minimum level, so if we consider the level of urbanisation too high, we should increase the size of the population.

On the other hand, combinations of high with low estimates produce unlikely results. Combining maximum values for the size of Alexandria and the towns with minimum values for population density and inhabited area results in levels of urbanisation which on comparative grounds can be considered impossible: 61%. Conversely, in a minimum/maximum calculation, levels of urbanisation drop to 10%.

The room for manoeuvre is in fact limited. It is not easily possible to substitute higher or lower estimates for the minimum and maximum estimates that are used here. In that respect, it also lends them greater credibility. They mutually support each other.

It also seems likely that the equation presents a universe whose properties expand or contract more or less simultaneously. Increases

in one variable are more likely to have been met with increases than by compensatory diminishments in other variables. The exact correlation between the different variables is impossible to determine, but it seems not very likely that, say, an increase in the inhabited area would not also imply at least some increase in the level of urbanisation. We are dealing with a balloon, not a seesaw. The corollary is that combinations of maximum with minimum estimates are unlikely to occur.

If this argument is accepted, it would be difficult to argue that levels of urbanisation were substantially below 20%. This is a finding of real importance, both because it provides a hard figure and because this figure is high in comparative perspective. Even in the most extreme (and therefore unlikely) scenario with a combination of maximum and minimum estimates, levels of urbanisation are still at a respectable 10%. Such figures suggest that Roman Egypt was heavily urbanised in the Roman period.

What figures are used is ultimately a matter of preference. The actual choice of figures has nevertheless important implications. Higher figures make Roman Egypt stand more out in relation to its previous and later history; lower figures place Egypt more in the *longue durée* of Egyptian history. Higher figures necessitate the construction of scenarios with more violent fluctuations; lower figures suggest much more stability, much less change.

At a more abstract level, the tension between primitivism and modernism inherent in so many discussions of the nature of the Roman Empire also shows here. A preference for low figures might be taken to imply that Roman Egypt remained relatively untouched by the Roman Empire, and therefore might be thought to represent a Roman Empire that was relatively incapable of inducing growth (no matter how defined) in the territories it conquered. High figures, on the contrary, imply an Egypt that was more Roman, and a Roman Empire whose impact was more directly felt.

Everyone is free to make his own choices, as long as the choices produce coherent sets of data. What is presented here is a broad band of probabilities. The methodology employed cannot establish hard facts, but provides a better way of getting a grip on the quantitative properties of Roman Egypt's population than separate discussions of individual variables. Not that the actual choices become easier.

PART ONE CHAPTER TWO

THE URBAN SYSTEM

URBAN SYSTEM THEORY

The most important finding of the previous chapter is that if our conventions about the population of Roman Egypt are even roughly right, levels of urbanisation must have been relatively high. They cannot have been much lower than 20%. This surprisingly high figure might suggest that Egypt formed one of the more urbanised parts of the Roman world. However, it is easy to base large claims on few figures, so it would help if more details about the nature of urbanisation in Roman Egypt could be provided.[1]

The problem for the urban history of Egypt is not that evidence is wanting. Indeed, in comparison to other regions of the Roman Empire there is nothing to complain about. The papyri of Egypt provide details that are unavailable elsewhere. The real problem is that the quality and the quantity of the sources vary substantially. Our ideas about the average town of Roman Egypt are informed by what we know of some *metropoleis* from Middle Egypt, most notably Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis. However, it should not be forgotten that there were about fifty *metropoleis* in Roman Egypt. All the thousands of texts with details about the urban life of Oxyrhynchos cannot remedy the fact that of some towns we hardly know their exact location. How to describe the urban landscape of Roman Egypt in the face of such unevenness?

The urban landscape of Roman Egypt can be described and studied at different levels, each requiring different techniques. One level is formed by studies of individual towns, either through archaeology or through papyrology, or a combination of both. Another concerns stud-

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[1] For other recent contributions to the subject, see the masterly survey of Bowman (2000), whose focus is mainly on process, not structure, and the wide-ranging discussions of Alston (2002), whose focus is on spatial arrangements.

ies of settlement patterns of particular nomes, at best through an interdisciplinary approach combining the fields of ecology, topography, archaeology and papyrology.[2] Another takes more distance, and tries to describe the world of the towns in more generalising terms.

All these approaches are important, but apart from practical considerations there are two reasons for focusing the present inquiry on the latter category, that of more generalised analysis. Firstly, Part One of this book focuses on the relation between the size of the urban population, the distribution of wealth, and the size and composition of the urban elite. In order to create a general model of these relations, we need to obtain some idea of urban population sizes. For the model, it is not necessary to be specific about individual towns (although information is of course welcome), but we do need to know about differences in order of magnitude between all the towns.

Secondly, such a generalising approach also holds an interest of its own. It is of relevance for the study of Roman urbanisation, a subject on which surprisingly enough there still exists no comprehensive monograph.[3] It is customary to point out that Rome and other large cities, Alexandria among them, were much larger than the large cities of pre-industrial Europe. Also, although slightly less well known, it seems likely that Roman levels of urbanisation equalled those of pre-industrial Europe.[4] Paradoxically, however, little is known in terms of quantitative data. It is hardly surprising that historians of other periods remain so unaware of Roman achievements.

The present chapter tries to analyse the towns of Roman Egypt as an urban system. The study of urban systems forms a formal, quantifying approach. It ranks cities according to population size. It does not make assumptions about the relations between these towns, but simply analyses in general terms differences in order of magnitude. It studies relative rank, and nothing more. Such a method is unlikely to produce precision with regard to specific towns, but is highly useful for the creation of a model.[5]

There are advantages and disadvantages to urban system theory. It is a simple, descriptive method that obviates the need to study pat-

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[2] See Rathbone (1994) for a sketch of the possibilities in the Fayum.

[3] I am referring to urbanisation as an economic phenomenon. For regional studies and relevant arguments, see Hopkins (1978b), Jongman (1990), (2003), Pleket (1993) and Morley (1996).

[4] See Jongman (2002b) 28-29 with the literature cited there.

[5] For the theory of urban systems see de Vries (1984).

terns of location and levels of interaction, as other, related, theories would require.[6] Discussion of such factors would only needlessly complicate the argument.

The main disadvantage is that population size forms only one of the factors that defines the city. Social, economic, political and cultural components could also be taken into account. By focusing on size alone, these components are not only ignored, but, one may argue with some justification, they are silently assumed to correspond with size. Thus, population size is bound to function as a proxy for these other indicators. The assumption is that the larger the population of a town, the higher the degree of social, economic, political and cultural complexity. It would surely be preferable to check whether this correlation is correct in all cases, but it is highly doubtful if this will ever be possible in the case of the towns of Roman Egypt. And it should not be forgotten that population size is usually regarded as the prime indicator of urban status, so we could do worse than start there.

The main advantage of an analysis as an urban system is practical. Whereas many other theories require knowledge that we do not possess, urban systems theory requires only information on two subjects: relative ranking and absolute size. For both, at least some data are available. To analyse this, two tactics are employed, one inductive, the other deductive. The inductive one is to study the significance of the estimates of the population of some of the towns. The deductive tactic is somewhat less conventional. It is based on the proposition that nome territory can be taken as a rough index of population size of *metropoleis*. This enables us to obtain an idea of the differences in urban population size between towns. Combining absolute figures with relative rank, it is possible to describe the urban system of Roman Egypt. The outcome is anything but precise, but helps in understanding some of the peculiarities of the urban landscape of Roman Egypt.

Urban Population Size

Let us start with the available figures for urban population size. For a number of towns, estimates of the size of the urban population are

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[6] I am thinking of Central Place Theory and Urban Network Analysis. For interesting applications, see Butzer (1976) and Alston and Alston (1997), Alston (2002) 331-344.

available. The estimates are based on extrapolation from much smaller figures that occur in the papyri. These figures concern, for example, the number of houses or the number of taxpayers in a particular district. These are then extrapolated to obtain a total estimate for the urban population. For example, each house is multiplied by the average number of inhabitants. Each taxpayer is multiplied by the number of non-tax paying people. Each quarter is multiplied by the total number of quarters. And so on.

All the estimates that are obtained in this way refer to what is called the total intramural population. All those who live within the town are included, independent of the actual existence of city-walls and independent of their age, gender or status. All those living outside the town are excluded, whatever their degree of dependency on the town. Residence thus defines who is urban, and nothing else.[7]

For five towns, more or less reliable estimates of the population are circulating in the scholarly literature.[8] Going from North to South, these are Thmouis in the Eastern Delta, Arsinoe in the Fayum, and, in the Nile Valley, Oxyrhynchos, Hermopolis, and Apollonopolis Heptakomias. I have little to add to the calculations, but for the sake of clarity it is important to set out the estimates in some detail. As will soon become clear, the evidence is fragile. Not all estimates are equally reliable, and some in fact involve assumptions that are tenuous.

The first estimate concerns Thmouis, the capital of the Mendesian nome, which was located in the south-eastern part of the Delta. Unlike the situation of other district capitals in the Delta, we are reasonably well informed about the town and the villages around it thanks to the find of carbonised papyri, dating to the 170s. It appears from these that in Thmouis both quarters and houses carried numbers. The highest attested quarter number is twenty.[9] Only one house number is

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[7] However, residence itself is not as simple a criterion as it may seem, for the official residence may differ from the place where one actually lives. However, as the estimates of population size are imprecise, that problem can safely be ignored.

[8] See Rathbone (1990) 120-121 for the most consistent series (cf. Alston (2001) 163 n.10). Other recent contributions: van Minnen (1987) 35-37; Bagnall (1993) 53; Bagnall and Frier (1994) 54-55; Alston and Alston (1997) 200-203, summarised in Alston (2001) 163-164; cf. also Alston (2002) 331-334. Much goes back to U. Wilcken's remarks in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920) 381; 426-430.

[9] Eleven such quarter numbers are known, see Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) s.v. Thmouis; these were subdivided into smaller units, again numbered. Of these subsections, the highest number thus far attested is 3.

known with absolute certainty: that of the 178th house of the twentieth quarter.[10] On the crucial, unproven, though not unlikely assumption of uniformity in quarter size, each of the twenty or more quarters contained at least 178 houses. Thmouis would then have 3,560 houses at least.[11] To people these 3,560 houses with inhabitants it is further assumed that on average seven persons lived in each house.[12] Thmouis would then have in the 170s at least a population of 25,000 inhabitants.[13]

The second estimate concerns Arsinoe, the capital of the Arsinoite nome. Here, we have a figure for taxpayers. A register from 72/73 reports in one quarter 385 male taxpayers.[14] There are thirty-seven quarters attested between the first and the third century.[15] Whether the organisation into quarters was never revised during this period remains somewhat uncertain; the figure of thirty-seven is therefore best regarded as a maximum.[16] On the crucial, but again unproven hypothesis that all quarters contained an equal amount of persons, the thirty-seven quarters would produce a figure of 14,245 taxpayers. Poll tax was only levied on the adult part of the male population. Model life tables suggest that each taxpayer stood for 3.1 persons.[17] With 37

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[10] It is twice mentioned, at *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 230 (after 174/175, see *B.L.* 11) lines 6 and 8. Further, at *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 231 (after 174/175, see *B.L.* 11) line 10, the number 137 occurs; although this does not stand at the place where it should be, it is likely to be another house number. Both texts originally contained many more house numbers; some of these are lost in lacunae, others are (due to carbonisation) illegible.

[11] As many of the papyri from Thmouis are still unpublished and some are of similar contents as the ones considered here (see *P.Thmouis* 1 (1985) p.1-4), it is certainly not unlikely that in the future the figures can be improved.

[12] This is a guess, though not an uneducated one. See below for further discussion.

[13] Other estimates: Rathbone (1990) 120 (21,500 inhabitants); Alston and Alston (1997) 203 (24,564 inhabitants). S. Kambitsis, in her introduction to *P Thmouis* 1 (1985) p.48, stated that the actual number of houses must have been much higher because Thmouis was a very important town, but she did not seem to realise that the resulting population is already quite substantial.

[14] *Stud.Pal.* 4 (1905) p.62-78 (72/73 A.D) line 16 presents the total figure, which includes some persons who were exempt from tax.

[15] These are conveniently listed in Daris (1981). Rathbone (1990) 121 n.47 thought the number was 39, but probably mistook a note number in Daris' text for a quarter number.

[16] Only thirteen quarter names are attested at the time the register was compiled; the other twenty-four might also already have been in existence, but we do not know. Daris (1981) believes the organisation was created somewhere in the period 30-60 and remained unchanged thereafter.

[17] Using Coale, Demeny and Vaughan (1983^2) model life table West level 3 males.

quarters, the population of Arsinoe would comprise slightly over 44,000 inhabitants.[18]

The third estimate concerns Oxyrhynchos. For this town, there are in fact two different estimates available, one on the basis of a house register, the other on the basis of the corn dole. Both are fraught with uncertainties, but taken together they might give some idea of the population of Oxyrhynchos in the third century.[19]

From a house register dating from 235 it appears that the western part of one of the quarters of Oxyrhynchos contained about 50 houses.[20] On the assumption that the quarter was divided in four parts (north, east, south, and west) and that these parts were of equal size, the whole quarter comprised 200 houses. In this period there existed approximately 30 quarters in Oxyrhynchos.[21] Again assuming uniform quarter size, Oxyrhynchos will have contained 6,000 houses. Using the multiplier of 7 inhabitants per house mentioned earlier, this would yield slightly below 42,000 inhabitants.[22] However, many of the

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[18] I assume the 47 males exempt from tax that are included in the total of 385 were also adults. With the 13 quarters at present attested at the period of the register, the population would consist of slightly over 15,500 inhabitants; this figure might be regarded as a (very low) minimum. Other estimates: Rathbone (1990) 121 (46,000 inhabitants, in reality probably lower); Alston and Alston (1997) 201 (27,071 inhabitants, with 17,500 at minimum and 36,500 at maximum).

[19] There are more data available, but these are of inferior quality. (a) The theatre could hold 11,200 spectators according to W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Tombs of the Courtiers and Oxyrhynkhos* (London 1925) 14, but even apart from the question how Flinders Petrie could make such a precise calculation from its scanty remains, Rathbone (1990) 120 rightly points out that the ratio of seating capacity to population size is notoriously imprecise. (b) Contra Krüger (1990) 67, the school exercise of theatre capacity in *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 186 R^{o} (4th cent.?) is even less useful (c) Although Fichman´s calculations on the basis of Late Antique guild membership produce in themselves a not unreasonable estimate of 12,000-18,000 persons in Late Antiquity, they have such wide margins of error that they cannot be taken seriously. Neither guild membership, nor number of guilds, nor the proportion of guild membership to the total working population is known with any degree of certainty (contra Fichman (1971) 118-120). (d) For the impossibility to use *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1454 (116) see Fichman (1971) 116-117 n.4.

[20] *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235), containing fragments of the register of one unknown part of the Goose keepers' quarter, and the northern and western part of the Hermaion quarter. The first two list 14 and 10 houses respectively, but are too fragmentary to use. The actual figure of western Hermaion depends on how double and triple houses are counted and on whether some marginal cases are included or excluded. However, as some entries at the beginnings and ends of the columns are not preserved it seems better to use the conveniently round figure of 50.

[21] S. Daris, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 132 (2000) 211-221.

[22] Other estimates: Fichman (1971) 115 (6,000 houses); van Minnen (1987) 36-37 (30,000 inhabitants); Alston and Alston (1997) 201-202 (37,950 inhabitants; adjusted to 21,000 to account for uninhabited houses).

houses were empty at the moment the register was drawn up, so the actual population in 235 may well have been significantly smaller, say 30,000 inhabitants.[23]

The second estimate for Oxyrhynchos is based on evidence from the distributions of the corn dole around 270. We know both the theoretical maximum and the actual figure of recipients of the grain dole. The maximum was 4,000; its actual figure was 3,750-3,759.[24] If the recipients each had their own household, a number of 3,750-4,000 male recipients implies a population size of above 20,000.[25] Although the fact that the *numerus fixus* was not met might suggest otherwise, the fact that the main category of recipients was chosen by lot must imply the existence of a substantial group excluded from the dole. Other groups, such as foreigners and slaves, would never qualify to begin with. To include those who received no corn, the estimate might be increased to the arbitrary but conveniently round figure of 30,000.[26]

An estimate for the population of Hermopolis is based on data preserved in a report about a special tax-levy dating to 266/7.[27] The report mentioned originally for each of its four quarters the number of *oikiai* (houses or households), and the total received sum of tax. Although the numbers of *oikiai* have disappeared in a lacuna, the tax rate and the totals for two of the quarters have been preserved. From these the number of *oikiai* can be easily worked out. There were

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[23] In this part of the town, at least 25 houses were reportedly uninhabited (in one form or another). This would halve the figures; but the preserved fragments of other parts suggest a slightly better ratio.

[24] *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2928 (ca. 268-271) and 2929 (270). Note also *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 908 (199), a contract between six eutheniarchs (magistrates supervising the food supply) in which it was specified that six bakeries were to grind 20 *artabas* of wheat daily. It is tempting to connect the arrangement with the corn dole. The figures mentioned would imply a number of 3,600 recipients, a figure remarkably close to that of the 270s. Cf. also van Minnen (1987) 36 n.15.

[25] The ratio of one artaba a month would itself be sufficient for one person. Alston and Alston (1997) 200-201 used a lower multiplier of 3.3 for turning recipients into total population (the same one used here in the Arsinoite estimate). Bowman (1996^2) 141 and van Minnen (1987) 36 used a multiplier of 6, assuming that each recipient is head of a household. The latter figure should be lowered to 5.4 on the basis of the census data, see *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) p.97, resulting in a population of at least 20,000.

[26] Other estimates: Bowman (1996^2) 141 (24,000 or more, perhaps 30,000); van Minnen (1987) 36 (30,000 inhabitants); Rathbone (1990) 120-121 (20,000-25,000); Alston and Alston (1997) 201 (12,087 inhabitants at minimum). Cf. Bagnall (1995) 80 (though not specifically on the corn dole).

[27] *Stud.Pal.* 5 (1905) 101 (266/267) with van Minnen (2002), a somewhat awkward borrowing of an unpublished re-edition of the text by M. Drew-Bear.

slightly over 2,300 *oikiai* in one, unknown,[28] quarter, and slightly over 1,900 *oikiai* in the quarter of West City. Hermopolis was divided in (just) four quarters. As the two preserved figures of 1,900 and 2,300 *oikiai* imply, these quarters were not of exactly the same size. However, the difference is not very large, so it seems legitimate to use the average of the two preserved figures for all four. This would yield 8,400 *oikiai*. It is an open question whether *oikia* refers to house or to household.[29] However, the unit of taxation was normally the household, not the house. If *oikia* referred to household, the 8,400 *oikiai* have to be multiplied with average urban household size. This yields a population of slightly above 45,000.[30]

The fifth and last town for which an estimate is available is Apollonopolis Heptakomias. This otherwise rather insignificant town is largely known through the papers that one of its *strategoi* carried back to his hometown Hermopolis. From one of the texts of his archive, dating to 116, it appears that the town possessed the exact number of 1,273 houses.[31] Seven inhabitants per house on average results in a population of slightly below 9,000 inhabitants.[32]

The results may be summarised as follows. Going from North to South, the population of Thmouis in the Eastern Delta comprised 25,000 inhabitants at minimum, that of Arsinoe in the Fayum 44,000 inhabitants at maximum, that of Oxyrhynchos between 20,000 and 42,000 inhabitants, that of Hermopolis 45,000 inhabitants and that of Apollonopolis Heptakomias 9,000 inhabitants.

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[28] For a reason that escapes me, U. Wilcken *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920) 429 thought that the unknown quarter was that of East City. This has been often followed. Cf. now van Minnen (2002) 292.

[29] As was pointed out by Bagnall and Frier (1994) 55.

[30] With average household size of 5.4. If *oikia* refers to house, the multiplier is 7, yielding a population of 58,800. Other estimates: Bowman (1985) 139 (20,000 inhabitants); Bowman (1996^2) 141 (30,000 inhabitants or more); Rathbone (1990) 120 (7,000 houses with 42,000 inhabitants); Bagnall (1993) 53 (7,000 houses with 25,000-50,000 inhabitants, with a greater likelihood for the higher part of the range); Bagnall and Frier (1994) 55 (about 7,000 houses with nearly 37,000 inhabitants); Alston and Alston (1997) 202-203 (8,468 houses with 58,429 inhabitants); van Minnen (2002) 292 (6,500 houses with 45,000 inhabitants).

[31] *P.Brem.* (1936) 23 (116) with U. Wilcken, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 6 (1920) 426-430. Two of the ten parts into which the town was divided were suburban, or stood at least physically apart from the rest of the community. However, as they were included in the count, they were clearly considered to belong to the town.

[32] Other estimates: Rathbone (1990) 120 (7,000 inhabitants); Alston and Alston (1997) 203 (8,784 inhabitants).

It is important to emphasise that these figures represent the current state of affairs. Information similar to that used in the calculations is available for many other towns. However, in the case of these towns crucial pieces are missing. In Panopolis in Upper Egypt we *might* have the number of houses of one quarter, and we know that quarters are numbered, but the highest quarter number attested is only five.[33] The newly created *polis* of Antinoopolis was divided into four quarters that each contained numbered blocks. We have a rough idea how many such blocks existed (at least 36, possibly over 50), but what the average number of inhabitants of each block was is anyone's guess.[34] Similarly, we know that Memphis possessed at least fifteen numbered quarters, but that is where our knowledge stops.[35]

Perhaps in the future, as new information comes to the surface with the publication of new papyri, some of these data may actually be used to produce new estimates, or other information may appear for other towns. However, although new estimates would be very welcome, at present the task lies not primarily in multiplying such examples. As new calculations are likely to use similar methods, it is far more relevant to ask how reliable the employed methodology is.

The question of the reliability of the population estimates is not an academic one. All estimates are obtained by extrapolation. With each

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[33] *P.Berl.Bork.* (1975) (early 4th cent.) lists over 300 houses. It is unproven but not unlikely that the register describes the contents of a single quarter. For numbered quarters, see *C.P.R.* 17b (1991) 34 (217/218), *P.Panop.* (1980) 11 (320), 12 (337), 27 (323). Interestingly, there are some Greek and Demotic mummy-labels from the region of Panopolis that carry quarter-numbers. The highest figure thus far attested is 15. However, some of the Demotic labels mention a place-name that apparently cannot be identified with Panopolis, and it is also possible that the numbers refer to some arrangement within the (unknown) necropolis itself. See W. Spiegelberg, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 66 (1931) 39-41, *P.Coll.Youtie* (1976) 111-113 (2nd-4th cent.) with *B.L.* 9; K.Th. Zauzich, *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 114 (1987) 97-99 and M. Smith in: A. Leahy and J. Tait eds, *Studies on Ancient Egypt in honour of H.S. Smith* (London 1999) 283-293.

[34] Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) s.v. Antinoopolis. A similar calculation may be attempted on the basis of the attested tribes and demes, but the problems are the same: we have no idea about the size of the groups.

[35] See Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) s.v. Memphis for the change from ethnically based quarter names into numbered ones in Roman times. The figure itself cannot be used because, as Jouguet (1911) 284 already pointed out, the number of quarters varied drastically between different nome capitals of roughly the same size. Other towns with numbered quarters beyond the ones already mentioned are Mendes (not a nome capital) (see *B.L.* 8 on *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 231 (after 174/175, see *B.L.* 11) lines 6-7) and the unknown Upper Egyptian town of *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) (91/92?) (though apparently, and rather strangely, alongside named ones). For a 4th quarter in Apollonopolis (Magna) see *C.P.J.* 2 (1960) p.108-109 with *S.B.* 22 (2001) 15507 (108).

multiplication, the margin of error becomes progressively larger. As many uncertainties remain about the multipliers, it is hardly surprising that different scholars have come up with different estimates. No matter how much we succeed in refining our multipliers, very wide margins of error are likely to remain. All estimates have problems.

Take the assumption of uniform quarter size. There is only one town where it seems relatively certain that quarters contained the same number of houses: Apollonopolis Heptakomias.[36] Ironically, it is also the place where it matters least. As we also know the total number of houses the estimate for the total population does not depend on an assumption of uniformity. What about the four other towns, however? In Thmouis, the fact that both houses and quarters were numbered perhaps implies uniform quarter size. Or does it? In Hermopolis, the two figures that are at our disposal actually show a divergent number of *oikiai* in each quarter. However, as the quarters were themselves large, the differences are not as significant as they may seem at first sight, and it seems legitimate to use the average of both. Unless, that is, the remaining two quarters were significantly different from the two known ones, which has in fact been argued by some.[37] About Arsinoe we have no clue. In Oxyrhynchos, the third century tribes that were used in the distributions of the corn dole seem to have consisted of groups of various sizes. The division into tribes was related though not equivalent to the division in quarters. Whether this implies that the quarters were also of various size remains open, but it certainly is not unlikely.[38] Without dismissing all estimates out of hand, it should

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[36] *Relatively*, because even here it is not absolutely certain. In *P.Brem.* (1936) 23 (116) Apollonopolis Heptakomias is divided into ten parts (two of them sub-urban). Each part contained between 123 and 132 houses. U. Wilcken, the editor of the text, argued that this division was equivalent to the division in quarters (*amphoda*) found elsewhere. This may well be correct, but it is noteworthy that the parts were not designated by a technical term (such as *amphodon* or *laura*), nor carried names or numbers. They were described only: “from the house of X to the house of Y”.

[37] Cf. Bowman (1985) 147 with n.53 on West Citadel Quarter; Rathbone (1990) 120; Bagnall (1993) 53; Bowman (1996^2) 141; van Minnen (2002) 291. However, note that as we possess only one, not two of the names of the quarters, it is impossible to say *which* are missing (though for an educated guess see van Minnen (2002) 292).

[38] *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2928 (ca. 268-271) and 2929 (270) list recipients in three classes of the corn dole according to 12 groups, which appear to be tribes. The number in the largest category, that of the ‘scrutinized’, varied between a low 107 and over 400. Although, rather confusingly, the tribes each carried the name of a quarter, quarter and tribe cannot have been equivalent. Here, 12 tribes are listed, whereas there were at least 24 (deleting no. 9, an uncertain case), and at most (including the same case) 34 quarters in the period under scrutiny, see the catalogue in Krüger (1990) 82-

be admitted that the assumption of uniform quarter size is tenuous. We can only hope that the figures we have of individual quarters are at least roughly representative of the rest.

Another problem should also be considered. In the house register of 235 that was used in the first estimate for the population of Oxyrhynchos about half of the houses were uninhabited. The text itself offers no explanation. It may be assumed that the situation is not representative for the normal situation, but that it is due to some crisis.[39] However, what if there is a structural explanation, for example that houses were built on top of each other and left to ruin once they were abandoned?[40] This would form only a minor point of academic interest if most of the calculations of urban population size were not based on numbers of houses and number of inhabitants. It obviously makes a serious difference if only half of all houses were occupied. Almost all towns for which estimates are offered would suddenly lose half their population.

Take also the average number of persons per house, used in almost all estimates. The number of persons per *household* is known from the census. The figures are so precise that it is even possible to draw a distinction between village and urban households.[41] However, the problem is that more than one household might have lived in a house.[42] Household and house thus did not completely overlap. Thus far, it has not been possible to produce a trustworthy figure for the average number of inhabitants in an urban house.[43] The figure of 7 in-

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88. However, the fact that the tribes were named after quarters implies some relation. Even if it is assumed that the smaller tribes comprised two quarters, and the larger three, it is very difficult to account for the variation in tribe size. It is of course possible that the proportions of recipients to urban inhabitants varied, but the more simple explanation is variation in quarter size. Cf. also *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3786 (3rd cent.) and *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3927 (after Febr. 246).

[39] See Fichman (1971) 114-115; cf. Braunert (1964) 270. A similar situation does not occur in the Panopolite house register of *P.Berl.Bork.* (1975) (early 4th cent.) (see Bagnall (1993) 53 n.56) or the (much smaller) Oxyrhynchite register of *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3300 (late 3rd cent.).

[40] V.B. Schuman, *Recherches de Papyrologie* 4 (1967) 171-173. See Bagnall (1993) 52 for a related phenomenon: whole quarters being left empty for centuries in Apollonopolis Magna.

[41] *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) p. 97: average minimum household size is 4.8 persons in villages, 5.4 in towns (and, amazingly low, 4.3 in *P.Oxy.Census*).

[42] The problem was raised for village housing by Hobson (1985). It was ignored by Rathbone (1990), but as he used in retrospect a slightly too high multiplier of 6 for average household size, the differences in outcome are insignificant. The estimate for Hermopolis in Bagnall (1993) 53 implied a maximum multiplier of 7.1.

[43] Alston (1997) 33-34 assumed the figure could be arrived at by dividing the

habitants per house used here is no more than a guess, based on an average household size of 5.4 persons, increased to a conveniently round figure. This is rather unsatisfactory, but at present there is hardly any other option.

True, not all estimates suffer in equal measure from the same defects. It is certainly possible to arrange the estimates in order of reliability. The more multipliers and the more assumptions are used, the lesser their trustworthiness is. By this standard, the best estimate is the one for Apollonopolis Heptakomias, for which we need to use only one multiplier. Next comes the estimate for Hermopolis, which also involves assumptions about missing quarters. Then comes the estimate for Thmouis, in itself reasonably reliable but a minimum. Then comes the figure of the Oxyrhynchite corn dole, involving one uncertain multiplier and one arbitrary addition. The estimates based on the house register from Oxyrhynchos and the tax register from Arsinoe come last, because in both cases the assumption of uniform quarter size seems rather dubious. Even this ranking appears to be subject to different interpretations, however.[44]

Furthermore, even if we had figures of good quality, it should not be forgotten that the figures come from different moments in time. The Arsinoite estimate refers to the first century, the Apollonopolite and Thmouite estimates to different moments in the second century, and the Hermopolite and the two Oxyrhynchite estimates to the third century. It seems likely that some fluctuations occurred in the course of the first three centuries, but we have no idea of the violence of such population swings.[45] We can only hope that they were not too dramatic. In short, it is an illusion to think that any of these figures pre-

number of inhabitants by the fraction of the house they owned. Implicitly, he thereby assumed that the remaining part of the houses was inhabited according to the same proportion of inhabitants per house, but that is precisely what is at issue. This vitiates the first five of his six estimates beyond repair. The sixth is based on wrong arithmetic: *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3300 (late 3rd cent.) shows 22 males living in 15 houses, not 16 in 12 houses. Anyway, the two urban estimates are based on very small samples and diverge radically.

[44] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 54-55 consider the Hermopolite estimate the best one. I cannot help thinking that the figure of Apollonopolis Heptakomias is ignored because it is so low. Alston and Alston (1997) 200-201 quite amazingly consider their (rather low) estimates based on the Oxyrhynchite corn dole figures (including the one derived from *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 908) and the Arsinoite figure the best.

[45] Cf. Eus., *H.E.* 7.21.9 a rhetorical comment by Dionysios, Bishop of Alexandria, on a serious drop in the Alexandrian population due to plague in the third century and *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235), discussed above.

sents an absolute truth. All are best regarded as educated guesses, no more. Whether we like it or not, the five figures present dots at different moments in time on graphs of unknown shape.

So much for hard facts. After all this, it is certainly tempting to dismiss all estimates out of hand. On the other hand, it would be a pity to lose the fruits of patient papyrological labour. The fact remains that there is no other region of the Roman Empire that yields so many estimates for urban populations of towns that were comparable in structure. In comparison to the estimates offered for other towns of the Roman Empire, there is nothing to be ashamed of.[46] For example, the fact that the estimates for Roman Egypt certainly refer to the intramural population is an important advancement on many estimates for communities elsewhere in the ancient world, where it is often even uncertain whether the people living on the territory of the community are included or not. It is in fact remarkable that so few estimates of Roman Egypt have entered broader ancient historical discussions on urban population size.

Also in other respects, the situation is not as bleak as it seems. First of all, the existence of scholarly consensus offers some basis for further explorations. No matter how the difficulties are envisaged, most scholars end up with roughly the same set of figures. That at least provides some comfort. Secondly, and more importantly, all calculations involve similar procedures. Most multipliers are used in more than one calculation—most notably the multiplier of average number of persons per house. Even if these multipliers prove to be in need of correction, the relative ranking would remain unaffected. Paradoxically, we end up with a set of figures each of which might be quite far off the mark, but which as a series can be considered to be relatively reliable.

In consequence, it can hardly be doubted that some of the towns of Roman Egypt were relatively large. It is possible to regard one figure as a statistical fluke, another one as unreliable, but despite their individual weaknesses the figures show collectively that the urban landscape of Roman Egypt consisted of some settlements that could easily rival those in other regions of the Roman Empire. The term 'town'—convenient for institutional reasons because the *metropoleis* lacked

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[46] Duncan-Jones (1982[2]) 259-287; for lack of Byzantine figures, see D. Claude, *Die byzantinische Stadt im 6. Jahrhundert* (Munich 1969) 162.

city rights—is therefore not completely appropriate. At least with respect to size the towns qualified as true cities.

What to do with the figures we have, however? We have estimates for four large towns and one small town. As we have seen in the previous chapter, it is possible to calculate an average urban population on the basis of these five figures. We would end up with fairly large average towns, however—'fairly large' in comparison to the rest of the Roman world, in comparison to pre-industrial Europe and in comparison to nineteenth-century Egypt. As we saw, the figure for average town size is for this reason usually downscaled somewhat. However, instead of arbitrary adjustments the figures can also be put into perspective by studying relative rank. We need to know how the large towns of Thmouis, Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis compare to the other nome capitals. We need to know whether there existed more towns as small as Apollonopolis Heptakomias.

Relative Rank

Can we delineate relative ranking? In the absence of real statistics this task may seem hopeless. For most *metropoleis* there is no evidence at all to provide us with an idea of their population size. In the previous section it became clear how fragile the basis is for the five estimates that we do have.

There might be a way out, however: there is an indirect indicator in the form of the sizes of the nomes.

As was described in the introduction of this book, these nomes were the administrative districts into which Egypt was divided from ancient times onwards. Each district had a capital, usually giving its name to the nome. Thus, Koptos was the capital of the Koptite nome, Oxyrhynchos of the Oxyrhynchite nome, and so on.

The proposition that will be explored here is that the size of these districts can be taken as an indication of the population size of their capitals. This proposition is based on the following argument. The economical territory of each town (the area from which the town was fed) can be supposed to have been formed by its own administrative territory, that is, by its nome. All nomes belonged to the same ecological system: their agriculture depended on the Nile. Therefore, agricultural conditions can be supposed to be roughly homogeneous. From the produce of each nome a fixed proportion was exported as

taxes and rents to Alexandria and beyond. From the remainder, both the rural and the urban population were fed. As average agricultural productivity is supposed to be the same from nome to nome and levels of labour input and food intake can be supposed to be stable, the density of the rural population should also be the same from nome to nome. The urban population did not produce its own food, but was dependent on rural production. The size of the towns depended on the size of the rural production, which depended on the size of the nome. Nome size can therefore be taken as an index of town size.

It is best to start our explorations of the hypothesis in the Nile Valley and the Fayum. It is here that figures for nome size are available. As we know the territory of most of the nomes of the Nile Valley, and have figures for the population of some towns, we are able to obtain a sense of the spectrum of population sizes in Middle and Upper Egypt.

The administrative division in nomes remained remarkably stable even over the course of millennia. In Roman times, small adjustments in nome boundaries and, one may assume, nome territory were made from time to time. The administrative history is complex, because most of the evidence is indirect. Suddenly a village is found back in a neighbouring nome, suggesting some adjustment of nome borders, who knows how large.[47] Less frequently but easier to trace, new nomes were created through subdivision of old ones.

The third-century nome capitals with known nome size are listed in Table 1.2.1 columns 1 to 3. The data are taken over from R. Bagnall, whose estimates concerned nome size at the beginning of the fourth century.[48] Slight adjustments have been made to adapt the data to third-century circumstances, and uncertain cases are eliminated.[49] Bagnall warns that the figures are very approximate, but there is no reason to think that they are widely off the mark. In some cases it is

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[47] For two examples of internal changes within the Herakleopolite nome, see Falivene (1998) 8-9 with 9 n.1. For examples of wandering villages crossing borders between the Oxyrhynchite and the Hermopolite nomes, see *P.Pher.* (1993) p.10.

[48] Bagnall (1993) app. 3, based on Butzer (1976) 74. Outside the Nile Valley, one addition can now be made to his list. Recently, a Mothite nome with Mothis as capital has appeared in the Dakhla Oasis; it was separated from the Hibite nome at the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th cent. See *P.Kellis* 4 (1997) p.73 with n.40 (307/8?) and literature cited there; *P.Bodl.* 1 (1996) p.94 (295 or 293?). Cf. R.S. Bagnall, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 116 (1997) 149-151 n.3.

[49] The Koussite and Antinoite nomes were only created at the end of the third century and are ignored. The combined area of the Latopolite and Hermonthite nomes was 225 km^2, but their individual sizes remain unknown. Both are therefore also ignored.

possible to produce independent estimates and these invariably suggest the same order of magnitude as Bagnall's figures.

The average nome size of the nomes whose territory is known is 410 km^2. However, as wide variation occurs, the average is not a helpful figure. The spectrum runs from a mere 72 km^2 in the case of the Ombite nome, to ca 1,400 km^2 in the case of Hermopolis. The majority of nomes had sizes below average, while three, Oxyrhynchos, Arsinoe and Hermopolis, possessed a size more than twice the average.

How do the available estimates fit in? Let us compare the estimates discussed in the previous section with nome size. Thmouis must of course be left out of account, for it was located in the Delta, and no nome size is known.[50] The other four estimates are listed in italic in the fourth column of Table 1.2.1. That the correlation with nome size is roughly correct in the case of these figures can hardly be doubted. The towns with large populations appear to have had correspondingly large nomes. Apollonopolis Heptakomias has a rather small nome in comparison.

It soon becomes apparent that the estimates produced in the previous section can hardly be representative of all nome capitals. To calculate average town size from these estimates is misleading. Three of the four are at the top of the list. On the basis of the size of their nome, there can hardly be any doubt that Arsinoe, Hermopolis, and Oxyrhynchos were the largest towns of the Nile valley. For the rest of the list, there is only one estimate available, that of Apollonopolis Heptakomias. The evidence is therefore biased towards the larger towns.

The disparity in the evidence has important consequences. Although the estimate of Apollonopolis Heptakomias is the most reliable of the series, it is very hard to use this single figure as a basis to produce a curve connecting the top of the list with the rest. Would Hypsele, with a nome of 125 km^2, be significantly smaller than Apollonopolis Heptakomias, with a nome of 206 km^2? How much larger

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[50] However, according to *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3205 (297-308) the Phernouphitou toparchy of the Mendesian nome comprised almost 16,000 arouras, incl. some uncultivated land. This is roughly 44 km^2. Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) list 16 toparchies. If all were of equal size, this would yield a nome territory of over 700 km^2. Because of the high number of toparchies and the uncertainty about the question whether the size of the Phernouphitou toparchy was representative, the margin of error is large, but there can be little doubt that the Mendesian nome was relatively large.

would Tentyra with a nome size of 300 km^2 be? The problem is that the shape of the curve remains unknown; it is certainly not based on a simple linear relationship. We have to balance between caution and precision. Ascribing exact sizes to each town produces a misleading sense of precision that will make the enterprise too speculative. Not to dispose entirely of figures, it seems useful to produce minimum-maximum estimates instead. These have been listed in the fourth column of Table 1.2.1.

The estimates have been chosen on the basis of two considerations. Firstly, the range should be in line with the available figures for urban population size discussed in the previous section. Secondly, taken together, they should produce an average town size that falls within the conventional range of 15,000-25,000 inhabitants discussed in the previous chapter. Due to the fact that even on a low estimate the levels of urbanisation are already high, preference is given to the lower part of that range.

The results can be seen in the fourth column of Table 1.2.1. Average town size is 14,000-22,000, the lower part of the range (and in fact sinking slightly below the 15,000 mark). Needless to say, the figures thus obtained again have wide margins of error. At no point should it be forgotten that these are not descriptive but tentative estimates. They are ultimately more concerned with relative rank than with absolute size. *If* the proposition is correct for, say, Diospolis (Thebes), the town ranked alongside a town like Lykopolis. *If* the figures are correct, Diospolis must have had a population in the order of 10,000-15,000 inhabitants. Such individual figures should only be used with the utmost caution. However, if the figure for Apollonopolis Heptakomias is considered to be relatively reliable and representative for towns with small nomes, it would in fact be very difficult to increase the estimates to higher ranges. Whatever the exact figures, there can be no doubt that most towns had rather small populations.

Generally, the results seem to fit our expectations. That Hermopolis, Arsinoe and Oxyrhynchos were the largest towns causes no real surprise. Panopolis and Ptolemais belong to the larger towns of Upper Egypt, which is what one would expect. Thebes is a shadow of its former self, which is in line with the evidence.[51] There are also causes for worry, however. Koptos is usually considered to be one of the largest towns of Upper Egypt, but figures low on the list because

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[51] A. Bataille, *Chronique d'Égypte* 26 (1951) 325-353.

of its small nome. Likewise Memphis, which in previous times had been one of the largest towns of Egypt. It is known that Memphis shrunk in size and importance in the Roman period, but to what extent remains unknown.[52]

TABLE 1.2.1 NOME CAPITALS AND NOME TERRITORIES

NOME CAPITAL[53]	NOME[54]	SIZE TERRITORY NOME (IN KM^2)[55]	ESTIMATED SIZE URBAN POPULATION[56]
Hermopolis	Hermopolite	ca 1,400[57]	*45,000*[58]
Arsinoe	Arsinoite	ca 900[59]	*44,000 or less*
Oxyrhynchos	Oxyrhynchite[60]	780[61]	*20,000-42,000*
Herakleopolis	Herakleopolite	643[+62]	17,500-27,500
Ptolemais (Hermiou)[63]	Thinite	613	17,500-27,500

[52] Cf. the estimates of Thompson (1988) 32-35 and 267, considered implausible by Rathbone (1990) 141 n.41.

[53] Based on Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) and Bagnall (1993) appendix 3.

[54] Based on Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) and, to a lesser extent, Bastianini and Whitehorne (1987).

[55] Taken from Bagnall (1993) appendix 3, adapted to third-century circumstances.

[56] Figures in normal type are based on rank-size distribution; those in italic type on independent estimates discussed in the previous section.

[57] At the end of the third century (ca 295, cf. A.K. Bowman, *Journal of Roman Studies* 66 (1976) 161) an Antinoite nome was carved out of the Hermopolite nome, consisting of a small tract of unknown size at the East bank. Around the same time (see Drew-Bear (1979) 149) the Koussite toparchy also became an independent nome. The third century figure given here is the sum of the ca 1,140 km^2 of the 4th century Hermopolite and Antinoite nomes plus 272 km^2 of the fourth-century Koussite nome. Jones (1974) 278 thought the cultivated area of the nome comprised 400,000 arouras; lowered to 300,000 by Bowman (1985) 147, resulting in a nome of 1,300 km^2. Cf. further the map in Drew-Bear (1979).

[58] The figure refers to the fourth century. In this period the area of the Hermopolite nome was smaller, ca 1140 km^2 less a small tract comprising the Antinoite nome. A figure of 1000 km^2 may be a good approximation.

[59] Thompson (1999) 124 thinks that the territory of the Arsinoite nome was at its peak in the Ptolemaic period and that it was at that moment larger than 1,300 km^2.

[60] At some point during the third century the Small Oasis was somehow administratively combined with the Oxyrhynchite nome, see *P.Mert.* 1 (1948) 26 (274) line 1n. For the present discussion the point is irrelevant.

[61] Krüger (1990) 37 estimated the Oxyrhynchite nome as 900 km^2. *S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 12208 (ca 350) implies an area of taxable cultivated land of 560 km^2. This would then cover some 70% of all Oxyrhynchite land, which seems plausible enough. See also Rowlandson (1996) 17 and xiv for a map.

[62] Cf. also the map in Falivene (1998).

[63] Bagnall (1993) app. 3 lists 'Thinis' as capital of the Thinite nome, but this must be a double mistake. The name of the town was This, not Thinis. It had given its name to the nome, but Ptolemais was certainly its capital in the Roman period, possibly

Panopolis	Panopolite	575	15,000-25,000
Antaiopolis	Antaiopolite	531	15,000-25,000
Koptos	Koptite	331	12,500-20,000
Diospolis (Parva)	Diospolite (Parva)	306	12,500-20,000
Tentyris	Tentyrite	300	12,500-20,000
Thebes / Diospolis (Magna),	Theban / Diospolite (Magna)	284	10,000-15,000
Memphis	Memphite	281	10,000-15,000
Lykopolis	Lykopolite	250	10,000-15,000
Apollonopolis Heptakomias	Apollonopolite Heptakomias	206	*9,000*
Aphroditopolis	Aphroditopolite	200	7,500-12,500
Apollonopolis (Magna)	Apollonopolite (Magna)	137	7,500-12,500
Nilopolis	Nilopolite	133	7,500-12,500
Hypsele	Hypselite	125	7,500-12,500
Kynopolis	Kynopolite	ca 110[64]	7,500-12,500
Ombos	Ombite	72[65]	5,000-10,000
Average (rounded)	20 towns	410	14,000-22,000

However, instead of discussing individual exceptions, it is important to clarify the nature of the argument. Rather than considering Koptos or Memphis alone, it is more interesting to look for structural shortcomings in the argumentation. This strategy serves more than one purpose. It might serve as a test: can the proposition stand up to criticism? It also might help to bring out points of interest: if some towns are considered too small, or too large, it has to be formulated why it is thought they are. Lastly, it is not only deviation that is of interest, but also agents of change: it needs to be known what governed changes in the urban landscape.

from its creation under Ptolemy I onwards, see Jones (1971[2]) 305.

[64] Cf. also the map in Rowlandson (1996) xiv.

[65] Note that the estimated area is extremely small compared to its length. The map in Baines and Málek (1980) 14 shows fertile ground only around Ombos and the north of it; none around Elephantine, Syene and Philai.

Testing the Model

Although the word is somewhat grandiose for a proposition of limited applicability, the proposition that nome size forms an indication of town size may be called a model. All underlying assumptions are based on similar principles of isometry, and ultimately rest on the assumption that the Nile Valley formed an ecologically uniform unit. That assumption might not be completely correct, but it forms a good starting point. The usefulness of the model lies in the fact that it obviates the need to use figures of which, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, only the contours are known. The model simply assumes that they are *the same* in all nomes.

Logically, models cannot be invalidated by individual cases that deviate from the prescribed pattern, for these would be regarded as exceptions. Koptos might be larger than prescribed by the proposition that nome size is an indication of town size, but that does not invalidate the model. It only diminishes its usefulness. However, the model cannot be *validated* empirically either. This has advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that the limits of the evidence are overcome. The disadvantage is that available sources are ignored.

The uneasy role between evidence and model becomes quickly apparent once the epistemological status of the five figures for the size of the urban populations is evaluated. What role do the figures play? The figures fit: there is a correlation between nome size and attested urban population sizes. This inspires confidence in the usefulness of the model. However, the figures cannot *prove* that the model is correct. They are too few in quantity and too poor in quality to serve as a test of the model. Rather, the reverse. The model might be used to suggest that the series is broadly correct. Nevertheless, the importance of the figures goes beyond comforting. They are also needed to convert relative into absolute size, if estimates are to be offered for the other towns. At least some faith has to be put in them.

However, ultimately the epistemological status of the evidence is of less concern. The question is not to what extent the evidence supports the model, or vice versa. Instead we should ask at which points the proposition is most vulnerable to attack. Isometry may be an elegant principle to work with, but it needs to be asked how far its principle applies.

To start with, an issue of definition should be considered. Defining the city is notoriously difficult. Theorists of urbanisation generally

use four criteria: the size of the population, the density of habitation, the proportion of the population engaged in non-agricultural production, and occupational specialization. That at least is the theory; in practice these criteria are difficult to apply. One common solution is to use population size alone, as a proxy of the other three. So, for early-modern Europe, all settlements with 10,000 inhabitants and over, or, less rigorously, those with more than 5,000 inhabitants are considered to be urban.[66] However, whether the one or the four criteria are taken, administrative status is left out. It does not matter whether a settlement is called a city. The reason for this is that in most if not all periods of history the formal status of a settlement need not correspond with reality. Settlements with city status might be insignificant, while very important regional centres might lack such status.

The arguments presented here pertain to nome capitals. Implicitly, urban status is thereby awarded on the basis of an administrative criterion. Would the use of an administrative definition lead to distortions, because some nome capitals should in fact have been classified as villages?

In general, it can be defended that in Roman Egypt administrative status is a useful criterion. All nome capitals would be considered to be ‘urban’ by theorists of urbanisation. The population of many nome capitals hovered around the (high) threshold of 10,000. Not all will have reached that figure, but all certainly had populations well above 5,000 inhabitants. Density of habitation was large, larger than in other settlements.[67] Occupational specialization and the proportion of the population engaged in non-agricultural production were both high, and it seems unlikely that villages reached similar levels.[68] In that respect the situation is better than in the rest of the Roman Empire, where there are many cases of one-horse towns possessing city-status.[69]

However, the question is not only whether all nome capitals were urban in character, the question is also whether nome capitals com-

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[66] Cf. de Vries (1984) 3-13.
[67] Bagnall (1993) 52.
[68] Van Minnen (1987), Alston and Alston (1997).
[69] See Jongman (2002b) 29 for Italy: outside Rome there existed, according to administrative criteria, 431 cities, with an estimated *average* urban population size of less than 2,000 inhabitants. If that was an average, many are likely to have been smaller.

prised all the settlements we would qualify as urban. Were the larger villages similar in structure and population size to the smaller nome capitals? Was there a continuum in settlements? Is the dichotomy between nome capitals and all other settlements correct? It should not be forgotten that many of the nome capitals must have been similar to Apollonopolis Heptakomias, with a population slightly below 9,000 inhabitants. If nome size is anything to go by, the majority of nome capitals must have been rather small.

By contrast, some of the settlements that are qualified as villages were certainly large and important. The Fayum presents the prime examples. Many villages had a population running in the thousands. Karanis is a well-known example.[70] It is certainly not an academic possibility that there existed settlements like Karanis that were as populous as small nome capitals. In that sense the boundaries between urban and rural settlements are certainly blurred.

However, the problem is not so much one of village size in itself. Karanis might have been as large as Apollonopolis Heptakomias, but in the Arsinoite nome in which Karanis lay, there could be little doubt about the nome capital: that was Arsinoe. Karanis could be considered urban, certainly, but Arsinoe was decidedly more urban. No matter how large the population of Karanis was, the population of Arsinoe might easily have been four times as large. Some scholars have readily labelled the Fayum villages as urban, but one may wonder how that helps our understanding of settlement patterns.[71]

Labelling apart, the issue can therefore be rephrased: it is one of primacy.[72] What needs to be established is the extent to which the nome capital stood apart from the surrounding villages. There would only be serious definitional problems if small nome capitals like Apollonopolis Heptakomias co-existed alongside large, Karanis-sized, villages. Most nomes contained a single centre: there existed little doubt which settlement functioned as capital. These nome capitals functioned as central places not only in an administrative, but also in a cultural, social and economic sense. Oxyrhynchos had no competitors in its nome, despite the fact that some of the villages of the

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[70] Van Minnen (1994) 234; also van Minnen (2002) 294 with n.26. See Alston (2002) 332 for a list of village sizes.

[71] Most notably Davoli (1998) 30-31.

[72] For the concept of primacy, see de Vries (1984) 88-90.

Oxyrhynchite nome appear to have been substantial. The same will have been true for many other nomes, the Arsinoite included.

There are also cases that are not so clear, however. Hermopolis suddenly in the second century found a Greek *polis* on its territory: Antinoopolis. It had to compete with it until the end of the third century, when a separate Antinoite nome was carved out of the Hermopolite nome. In the same nome, Koussai was another competitor. It had in former times been a nome capital, and managed to regain its status around the same time as Antinoopolis acquired its own nome. Elephantine and Syene were important enough to have a somewhat separate administrative status in the Omboite nome, alongside the nome capital Ombos. The Thinite nome had the Greek *polis* of Ptolemais as its capital, but also contained Abydos and This, both former nome capitals.

More such examples could be given, also outside the Nile Valley.[73] Some nomes in effect contained 'twin towns'. As a rule, the competitors can most easily be located in former or future nome capitals and the capitals of subdivisions (toparchies) of the nome. Obviously, in a nome only one town could be the capital. The balance, however, could shift from one town to another. It is here, in these nomes with twin towns, that the definition is most vulnerable to attack. The other towns lacked the administrative status, but must have been quite urban in all other respects.

To some extent this is merely a semantic question. The focus here is on nome capitals for the simple reason that they provided the homes for the local elites. Whether other urban centres existed matters less. The question itself is of real interest, however, for it leads to a very important subject: the issue of change. It is not only deviations from the prescribed pattern we are looking for, but also agents of change. If town size depended solely on nome size, there is no reason to expect changes in the urban landscape at all. The question should be raised what governed change.

In the course of centuries, changes certainly occurred. Some towns rose to prominence, others fell into oblivion. New nomes were created, others were subsumed in other nomes. A Hypselite nome, named

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[73] The Mothite nome, created in the Dakhla Oasis at the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century, had according to *P.Kellis* 4 (1997) p.73 apart from its capital Mothis other settlements of equal importance. In the southeastern Delta Mendes had lost its status as nome capital to Thmouis, but continued to preserve (and share) some of its administrative infrastructure, see *P.Thmouis* 1 (1985).

after the new *metropolis* Hypsele, was carved out of the Lykopolite nome in the first quarter of the second century. Some time before 200, Herakleopolis lost part of its nome to Nilopolis, a renamed former capital of one its districts.[74] The creation of the Koussite and Antinoite nomes out of the Hermopolite nome at the end of the third century has already been mentioned. Such restructuring may be regarded as either effect or as cause of a change in the size of the population of a given settlement. A nome capital could be created *ex nihilo* and then rise to prominence, or a settlement with village status might rise to prominence and then acquire the status of nome capital. Sooner or later, adjustments had to be made either on the economic or on the administrative side. The importance of administrative restructuring thus extended beyond mere bureaucratic adjustment. Changing villages into towns and vice versa was certainly not dependent on mere administrative whim.[75]

However, what governed such changes? The proposition that nome size forms a rough indication of town size can only describe the results of change, but cannot explain it. The situation at the second century might be different from that of the fourth. With the help of the proposition, we can chart the situation in each period, but we cannot analyse the causes of the transition. In that respect it presents a static world. The answer to this problem has to be sought in the problematic parts of the proposition. Precisely those phenomena that cause divergences from the proposition that nome size forms an indication of urban population size, can also be regarded as agents of change.

So let us consider what could govern deviations from the pattern, and hence serve as an agent of change. Four subjects should be considered: ecological differentiation, patterns of landholding, non-agricultural central functions, and non-agricultural production. All of these concern large and important subjects, and there can be no question of discussing them exhaustively here. However, a brief survey of the issues, focusing mostly on the third century, might be helpful.

Firstly, ecological differences. The basis of the proposition that nome size provides an indication of town size is that the Nile Valley forms an ecologically uniform unit. Seen from the perspective of the

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[74] According to Falivene (1998) s.v. Tilothis and Neilou polis the Nilopolite nome had been carved out of the Herakleopolite nome by 225. But the nome appears already earlier, in *P.Oxy.* 47 (1980) 3362 (2nd half 2nd cent.).

[75] Contra Alston and Alston (1997) 200.

rest of the Mediterranean world, this is undoubtedly correct. Outside Egypt, agriculture depended on rainfall. Not only was the amount of interannual variation high. Due to the varieties of landscape, regional differences were very marked. Indeed, in a nice paradox, fragmentation of the landscape has been held as the defining criterion of the Mediterranean world.[76] From that perspective, the contrast with the Nile Valley could not be larger. There could be huge disparities in the level of the annual flood, but these affected all nomes alike. In that respect the Nile Valley was as uniform as one could possibly expect.

Of course there were differences within the Nile Valley, but the question is whether these differences also showed at nome level. Take one example, concerning agricultural productivity. It is well known that figures for yield could vary quite considerably. Not all parcels of land were equally productive, despite the fact that they belonged to the same ecological system. However, these differences can be supposed to have cancelled each other out at nome level. The differences in yield would only become problematic if they would differ from nome to nome; if, in other words, average yield differed substantially between one nome and the other. Such regional differences have not been established.

The second possibility for deviation from the patterns that can also act as an agent of change is perhaps more important. The model is based on the assumption that economic territory and administrative territory are identical, so that towns could be fed from their own nomes. This implies that the landholdings of the inhabitants of the nome were located within the nome. In general, this will have been the case. Property holding, however, was extremely dispersed. This phenomenon will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail. Suffice it to say that land was owned in small plots, scattered all over the place. Holdings did not always remain confined to the own nome. The wealthiest landowners also owned land elsewhere in Egypt, usually in neighbouring nomes. Economic and administrative territory not always overlapped completely.

The consequences of this phenomenon seem limited, however. It may be assumed that the total amount in the hands of non-locals was roughly the same everywhere, and that the effects cancel each other out. It may further be argued with justification that interregional land-

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[76] Horden and Purcell (2000); see also R. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures: the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside* (London 1987) 31-34.

owning was a limited phenomenon. The number of attested cases is small. Admittedly there are two cities of which it is known that landholding outside the nome was extensive, but both are also rather exceptional.

The first concerns Antinoopolis. The Greek *polis* Antinoopolis was created in 130. Its population was recruited from other parts of Egypt, which, we may assume, initially kept their holdings of property in their place of origin. Over time concentration of holdings around Antinoopolis must have occurred. Put crudely, it was easier to own land nearby than far away.[77] Hence people acquired land in the Hermopolite nome, the nome in which Antinoopolis was located. Later on, at the end of the third century, a small Antinoite nome was carved out of the Hermopolite nome. However, even in the middle of the fourth century, still a significant proportion of Antinoites were holding land in the neighbouring Hermopolite nome.[78] This suggests that the nome did not satisfy economic demands, or, in other words, that the size of the Antinoite nome was insufficient. The economic territory of Antinoopolis was clearly larger than its administrative territory.

Also exceptional was the case of Alexandrian landholding. This forms a somewhat different case of interregional landowning. For lack of a significant territory around Alexandria, its landowners owned substantial landholdings in the *chora*. As Alexandrian holdings were usually extraordinarily large, it would take only a few Alexandrians to have a substantial part of the nome given over to non-local agricultural production. We should certainly allow for variations in the patterns, though we have no way to judge its effects.

However, as will be discussed later, it should be realised that many of the Alexandrian landowners originated from the *chora*. These were local worthies whose power and wealth transcended the rest of the local landowners and who rose accordingly. Possibilities for such social advancement were certainly larger in richer nomes, that is, the nomes with more land. It can therefore be expected that at least a part of Alexandrian landholding was in proportion to nome size. Deviations

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[77] It is a crude simplification, because many Antinoites remained resident in their original nome. See Braunert (1964) 123-126 for the distribution of Antinoite property holdings over several nomes, most notably the Arsinoite.

[78] *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) (after 346/347).

from the patterns of local landholding may certainly have occurred, but were less large than one might initially expect.

The discussion should not be confined to agriculture. One could also think of distortions from the patterns due to non-agricultural factors. The third possibility for deviations from the pattern is that there might have been administrative, religious or military centres that were larger than one would expect on the basis of available land alone. Undoubtedly such centres were chosen on the basis of status, but this status might not have been determined by size alone. Historical considerations could also be important. It would be too crude a simplification to suppose without further thought that all these functions were to be found in towns that were already large.

Some towns may have possessed administrative importance transcending their own nome. These could be towns where the *epistrategos* resided, or where the prefect held his hearings. It has been shown, however, that the prefect's *conventus* was not always held in the same towns.[79] With regard to the residence of the *epistrategos*, it is likely that *epistrategoi* had a fixed residence, but in which town is more difficult to say.[80] Nevertheless, it is quite certain that some towns had more administrative responsibilities than being mere nome capital. Memphis and Pelousion in the Eastern Delta are both known as residence of the *epistrategos* and as *conventus* centres. Such places might have been larger than could be supposed on the basis of their nome size alone. They attracted throngs of visitors and thus may have generated much economic activity.

Many towns possessed large temples, some of them still visible today. Some of these attracted large crowds of worshippers, also from further away. Whether religious activities led to dramatic differences in local economies remains an open question. The economic dynamics of temples are complex, and by the third century, the economic significance of these temples was dwindling anyway.[81] It is well-known that temples dominated the economy of some Egyptian villages; whether such could be the case in the *metropoleis* is more doubtful.

Some towns also had military centres. In the western Roman Empire, the army often stood at the basis of the growth of settlements. In

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[79] R. Haensch in: B. Kramer e.a., *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses 1* (Stuttgart and Leipzig 1997) 320-391.

[80] Thomas (1982) 57-59 for a clear exposé.

[81] Bagnall (1993) 261-268; Frankfurter (1998).

Egypt, some units were located in or near urban centres. We might suppose that they generated extra demand, for clothes, weapons and food. However, in Roman Egypt the army numerically never made a significant presence, and was, more importantly, integrated in the fabric of urban life.[82] Soldiers had to be fed, but so did the rest of the population. It seems rather unlikely that the army was anywhere as important as to cause deviations from the patterns.

It is not only central functions that may be looked at. Non-agricultural *production* might also be an explanation for distortions from the pattern. At least in theory, towns could grow wealthy through the production of specific goods, or through trade. There are some possible examples of this in the Nile Valley. However, exact evaluation is difficult, not in the least because we are entering the debate about the nature of the ancient economy.

The nature of the urban economy will be discussed in the next chapter in more detail. An indication could be provided by local specialisation. Did some towns engage more in the production of one type of goods, others in another? And did some towns consequently become prosperous, while others remained agricultural backwaters?

It is important to realise that most non-agricultural production was closely related to agricultural production, and that most, if not all, non-agricultural production was small-scale. Specific towns might specialise in certain products, perhaps, but there will have been clear limits to specialisation.

Let us consider one case, a famous one, concerning textile production. (Another case, the question to what extent Koptos benefited from the Red Sea trade, will be discussed in the next chapter.) A text from Oxyrhynchos contains a list of clothes, mentioning 2,000 pieces of finished clothing, produced in a five-day period. Originally taken to be a laundry-list (sic), it has been re-interpreted as a tax-list of clothes for export.[83] Although the text is difficult to understand in its particulars, its contents suggest strongly that the clothes were not centrally produced and centrally transported. We are clearly in the world of small-scale urban production. However, the totals are nevertheless large. If, as has been argued, the figure of 2,000 is roughly representative for normal production patterns, the annual total production might well be in the order of 100,000 pieces of cloth. This was—

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[82] Alston (1995), cf. the introduction to Alston (2002).

[83] Van Minnen (1986) on *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 40 (after middle of 3rd cent.).

presumably—far more that the town itself required, and the implication must be that Oxyrhynchos was a major producer of finished clothing. However, if production, storage and transport were as haphazard as they probably were, there is no reason to take the figure of 2,000 as representative for anything but the production in that particular period of time. The uncertain nature of the text simply does not warrant the claim that Oxyrhynchos was a major centre of textile production. The argument presents a classic case of privileging one text (whose interpretation is quite uncertain) over all the rest of our knowledge. It is very hard to reconcile the fact that Oxyrhynchos was a major textile producing centre of the Mediterranean with the fact that the thousands of other Oxyrhynchite texts contain not a single reference to it.[84]

So, in sum, we end up with a number of possible distortions from the pattern. In individual cases (Memphis, Koptos) it is certainly possible that towns were more important than predicted on the basis of nome size alone. However, none of the possibilities is so serious that we have to assume that the proposition is fatally flawed. Nor is its usefulness really diminished by the existence of such examples. Of course, the model might be further refined. All the factors discussed might be integrated in the proposition. However, an increase in refinement would also diminish its transparency. It is, after all, a model, nothing more, nothing less.

Exploring the Urban System of Roman Egypt

The last step is to extrapolate the argument to the rest of Egypt. We have to discuss the urban world of the Delta, and, less importantly, the desert regions outside the Nile Valley and Delta.

The problems in describing the urban landscape of the Delta seem endless. Apart from Thmouis, we have very little information about the size of nomes or the population of nome capitals. Athribis may have been as large as Thmouis.[85] Pachnemounis was probably one of the smaller towns.[86] However, these are little more than impressions.[87]

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[84] For a more favourable explanation of this methodological problem see Bagnall (1995) 80-81.
[85] So Amm.Marc. 22.16.6.
[86] Hogarth (1904).
[87] Even the find of papyri from the Delta does not always help, cf. the otherwise

Much is unknown and it is easy to drown in the uncertainties of the administrative history of the Delta.[88] Some towns cannot even be located with certainty, and some nomes are extremely obscure. It will come as no surprise that the boundaries between the nomes are only vaguely known. With the exception of Memphis, discussed in the previous section, the territory of the nomes cannot be estimated.

There were also settlements outside the Delta and the Nile Valley. Both in the Western and in the Eastern Desert oases could be found, and in some of these flourishing communities sprung up. However, thus far only one third-century nome capital is known in these areas: Hibis, in the Kharga Oasis. There can be little doubt that due to the particular ecology, the settlements in the desert were smaller. Some of them were only inhabited during parts of the year. Apart from Hibis, they can be safely ignored.

Without looking at individual towns, we may study the general picture. This involves the application of thick paint with a broad brush. In the previous section, a relative ranking for twenty nome capitals had been offered. In all there must have existed approximately fifty third-century nome capitals. To obtain a sense of the hierarchy of the whole of Roman Egypt, we may simply multiply the spectrum of town sizes with 2.5, and place Alexandria on top. This is a rather crude tactic, but precision is inappropriate where so little is known.

Some comfort may be provided by the fact that the figures work out remarkably well. The twenty nomes of the Nile Valley consist on average of 410 km^2. With similar average size, the total of fifty nome capitals would comprise 20,500 km^2, perfectly within the range of 15,000-25,000 km^2 used in the previous chapter.

The resulting urban system can be described as follows. Seen for the whole of Egypt, it consists of one very large centre, a couple of quite sizable towns, some towns of intermediate size and a majority of rather small ones. Expressed in orders of magnitude, the differences may have been 1:10:25:50. Hermopolis was about five times as large as Apollonopolis Heptakomias, while Alexandria was ten times as large as Hermopolis.

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important publication of the carbonized papyri from Boubastis in *P.Bub.* 1 (1989) and 2 (1998).

[88] The best introduction to the archaeology and epigraphic evidence is provided by *I.Delta* (1970).

A comparison with Roman Italy is instructive.[89] The situation in Roman Italy is roughly similar to that of Roman Egypt, with an urban system that is also strongly pyramidal in form. However, there is also a difference. The variation in population size between Alexandria and a town the size of Hermopolis appears to have been large. It dwindles, however, in comparison to Roman Italy. No matter how large we think the second largest city was, the gap with Rome was larger than the gap in Roman Egypt. In formal language: the primacy of the urban system was less marked in Roman Egypt. There can be little doubt that the greater primacy of the urban system of Italy was a function of the political power of Rome.

The Egyptian proportions convey a sense of differences in feel. Seen from Alexandria, all towns in the *chora* must have looked small, no matter what their differences were. They looked rather like what M.I. Finley thought of Oxyrhynchos: an 'insignificant village', whose information was not worth to be taken seriously.[90] Certainly not 'shining and most shining', as Oxyrhynchos advertised itself from 272 onwards. Conversely, for the visitor from the *chora*, Alexandria must have been dazzling.

The distance separating Alexandria from the *chora* is common knowledge. No discussion of urban systems is needed to perceive this. More interesting is the internal differentiation between nome capitals. Some nome capitals were mundane centres, of high social and economic complexity, but others were hardly more than backwaters. The former are best known, because it is from these that the bulk of the papyri originate. It is only occasionally that we learn about the latter.

The fact that the smaller towns are not well represented in the evidence raises an important point. It is well known that the papyri originate from a limited region of Egypt. In that sense we are at the mercy of haphazard patterns of survival. However, it is less well realised that the papyri originate from the nomes with the largest capitals. Somehow we have to keep our minds open for the world of much smaller communities. Here the advantages of modelling become quickly apparent: it is possible to circumvent the limits imposed by the evidence.

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89 For which see Morley (1996).
90 Finley (1985^2) 203 (also mentioned in the introduction).

CONCLUSION

The main justification for discussing the urban system of Roman Egypt is the fact that a high level of urbanisation is seen as one of the main characteristics of the Roman Empire, but that little is known about its structure. The urban system of the Roman Empire as a whole consists of a few very large cities of 100,000 inhabitants and over, relatively few cities in the intermediate category (50,000-100,000) and a very high number of 'small' cities (5,000-50,000). The focus is usually on the handful of very large cities. These certainly merit attention—in comparative perspective their size is astonishing—but to describe the small cities could also help. Egypt should claim our attention because here at least some figures are available, which limit the extent of our speculation.

A discussion of the properties of the urban system of Roman Egypt puts the surviving high figures in perspective: they cannot be regarded as representative. Lack of consideration of relative ranking has led to more distortion than is warranted. Oxyrhynchos was not an average town. Assuming that nome size is a rough index of town size opens the possibility of offering a set of estimates for other towns. These should, I would suggest, be considered as 'working-figures'—on the analogy of working hypotheses. They function as a starting-point: they form the alpha, certainly not the alpha and omega of a description of the urban system. Caution is therefore warranted in the use of individual figures. We need not expect a full fit between model and historical reality and the model should not be regarded as a completely accurate description of historical reality at any specific moment in time. Collectively the figures might be more helpful, as a delineation of relative rank. The possibilities for deviations from the pattern are certainly present, but do not seem to threaten the argument beyond repair. The final contention then, is that the model stands relatively close to historical reality and forms a helpful tool to study that reality.

PART ONE CHAPTER THREE

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INEQUALITY

The Estate of a Town Councillor

In June 276 the Oyrhynchite town councillor, *exegetes* and president of the council Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon apparently felt his life drawing to an end and drew up his will. In this document, he appointed his five children as his heirs. Further, he made some arrangements for his wife and made provisions on behalf of a friend. The will, which despite some lacunae is well preserved, has attracted scholarly interest because it adheres closely to Roman formulae. It is also important for other reasons: it provides a fairly full description of the estate of a town councillor.[1]

The estate of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon consisted of cornland in six villages, vineyards in three villages, a house and furniture in Oxyrhynchos and six slaves. Bits and pieces: vineyards and grain lands, a house and slaves. His high position in society as president of the town council suggests that Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon was one of the wealthiest men of Oxyrhynchos, but exactly how wealthy was he? What was the size of the plots? What value would the houses represent? How much would six slaves cost?

Despite the detailed description of each item, the exact value of the estate of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon is difficult to gauge. The will served to establish the title of the heirs to specific items; it was unnecessary to offer monetary values or to provide exact measures of the land involved. An indirect indication of the total value of the estate is provided by the share of one of the daughters, Aurelia Didyme. She was a minor, still unmarried, hence provisions were made for her dowry. Apart from her inheritance of a share of a vineyard and one of

[1] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276), a copy of the will after opening. Both the date of the composition of the will and the date of its opening are preserved; they show that Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon died within a month.

the slaves, the will also stated that she had to receive a dowry of four silver talents. As will be discussed in Part Two Chapter Three, dowries were indirectly compensated in the inheritance: receiving a dowry meant a smaller inheritance. If all shares were of equal value (as was the case in intestate succession), the five children inherited an estate worth at least 20 talents. This is certainly a minimum estimate, because Didyme also inherited a slave and vineyard and in consequence her total share was larger. Nevertheless, twenty silver talents was already a substantial sum. At a guess, it might have bought about 120 arouras of land, which by itself might have been sufficient to qualify Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon for the Oxyrhynchite council.[2]

Economic Differentiation

Of course, wealth is a relative concept. It is not really helpful to know the value of the property of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon if we have no idea about other people's property, about levels of income, about price levels. The ownership of grain land, vineyards, houses and slaves means little without comparison. We need to know where Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon stood relative to other presidents of the town council, to other councillors, to members of the urban elites of other towns. We need to know what distinguished him and his colleagues from the rest of the population. In short, what is at issue is the extent of economic differentiation. How many people owned what percentage of what kind of property? Who could be considered really wealthy? Who fell below the poverty line? How was inequality distributed over the population?

The importance of such questions can hardly be exaggerated. The extent of economic differentiation is one of the fundamental properties that shape the character of any society. To the Romans, wealth was extremely important. There can be no doubt that it formed the basis of social status. Economic differentiation correlated to a large extent with social hierarchy. Social status was, to be sure, determined by more factors, such as legal status, political rights, gender and ethnic-

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[2] Converting money back into land is extremely hazardous because inflation was just starting at the moment the text was written (276). I have used in this case the admittedly rather arbitrary round price of 1000 dr. per aroura (see Drexhage (1991) 127-135). The major room for uncertainty lies somewhere else, however: in the relation of dowries to inheritances. This is discussed in Part Two Chapter Three.

ity. Wealth was necessary, not sufficient.[3] Nevertheless, there can be no doubt about the primacy of wealth. Without an analysis of wealth, any analysis of elite formation is therefore bound to fail.

The analysis of economic differentiation in the Roman world is not always easy, however. Much of the wealth of the Roman world consisted of holdings of land. Detailed knowledge about estates is usually lacking. Thus, ideas about Roman property are more easily formulated than substantiated. This problem is especially pertinent in the case of the urban elites of the smaller cities of the Roman Empire. Members of such elites were certainly wealthy by local standards, but to what extent elites were internally differentiated remains elusive. Hard evidence is scarce. We sometimes know what sums were necessary for entrance into the elite, but we hardly ever have a sense of the meaning of such figures.[4]

Again, Roman Egypt is one of the few regions of the empire that can provide details. The Egyptian evidence presents excellent opportunities to embark on a study of wealth and inequality. In Egypt, the distribution of property among the population can be quantified and modelled on the basis of surviving land registers. Their analysis is greatly facilitated by the fact that so much else is known about Egyptian agriculture and patterns of landholding. Thanks to the survival of thousands of documents, we know what crops were planted, what systems of land tenure were used, and how landholdings were transmitted to the next generation. The Egyptian evidence is therefore to be preferred by a wide margin over the evidence from other parts of the Roman Empire.[5]

Needless to say, the evidence from Roman Egypt is not without problems either. Just as in the previous chapter, the ancient data cannot stand on their own. They are disparate and fragmentary. They need an interpretative framework that can only be provided by modern theory. However, in contrast to the previous chapter, the quality of the sources is so much better that we can rely to a much larger degree

[3] The most elegant demonstration of this principle can be found in Jongman (1988) 207-273.

[4] Duncan-Jones (1982²), esp. 82-88 and 147-155 unwittingly demonstrates the point.

[5] For a survey of the evidence, see Duncan-Jones (1990) 121-142. The *alimenta* tables, for which see Jongman (2002a), provide the best Roman data outside Egypt. Their main problem is that it is not known what proportion of landowners participated in the project.

on them. The balance between evidence and model can shift to the former.

In some other respects the analysis is also simpler. Other scholars have already paid close attention to the land registers and analysed their data extensively.[6] In effect their work constitutes a mini-debate about economic differentiation in the Roman world. The methods and problems of the analysis of inequality have been set out with clarity. The ground has been prepared, and it suffices in many cases to follow the tracks.

At the same time ventures into new territory remain necessary. It is necessary to add variety and complexity to the existing models of property relations. Although there cannot be any doubt that land formed the principal form of elite wealth, it is also useful to focus on other sources of wealth. Further, the role of women needs to be discussed. Lastly, it needs to be asked what the effects of differences in town size were on the distribution of holdings.

The aim of this chapter is to describe the distribution of wealth among the urban elites of the towns of third-century Roman Egypt. This will provide a perspective for elite formation, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Only to a limited extent does the rest of the population need to be discussed. It is necessary to know what separated the elite from the less fortunate, but not what the meagre earnings of the urban poor were, no matter how interesting such an analysis in itself would be.[7] The perspective is deliberately top-down.

In what follows, I will argue that non-agricultural sources of wealth show a diversification of elite interests, but at the same time remain related to the agricultural activities of the elite. With respect to land, ownership remained confined to a small group of the urban population, with a substantial minority of women among them. Within that small group of urban landowners, the degree of inequality was high. A large group of landowners owned too little land to make a living from. At the apex stood a small group of landowners that could be considered really wealthy, while in-between these two groups a substantial number of landowners possessed holdings of intermediate size.

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[6] Mainly Jones (1974) 228-256, Duncan-Jones (1990) 121-142, Bowman (1985) and Bagnall (1992a).

[7] Presumably due to a lack of interest that is legitimated by the absence of adequate sources, this is a neglected topic in the study of Roman Egypt.

These arguments lead to a somewhat more nuanced picture of the wealth of urban elites. On the one hand, it will become clear that land tells only part of the story. The existence of other forms of wealth and the far from straightforward relation between wealth and income imply that a ranking according to the size of holdings can offer only a dim reflection of economic reality. On the other hand, the fact that other sources of wealth remained by and large related to agriculture implies that land is not too bad a guide to economic differentiation. The distribution patterns of landholdings make it undeniable, if ever it was in doubt, that there was a high degree of inequality in the towns of Roman Egypt.

SOURCES OF WEALTH

It is noteworthy how prominent land figures in the will of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon. Apart from slaves and a house, his property consisted of corn land and vineyards, held in several villages. Other documents related to elite inheritances show a similar situation. Elite inheritances consisted primarily of land.

In fact, the importance of land for members of the elite may appear so self-evident that its dominance is unworthy of much attention. However, it does matter for the study of economic differentiation. If landholdings provide the window through which economic differentiation is studied, it needs to be determined to what extent other forms of wealth formed alternative or supplementary sources of income.[8] Does the dominance of land over other forms of wealth also imply that the distribution of landed wealth forms a good guide to economic differentiation in general?

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[8] In what follows, income accruing from offices and liturgies will be ignored. The possibilities for enrichment (and the risks of impoverishment) were by no means insubstantial. But they formed a secondary type of wealth: the possibilities to engage in such activities were dependent on the size of the estate.

It is tempting to ignore the question.[9] The assumption that land dominated over all other forms of wealth is all too convenient, because almost all serial data about wealth in Roman Egypt concern land.[10] For want of comparable sources other forms of wealth are much harder to analyse and hardly allow for quantification. For example, it is known that some members of the urban elites owned several houses, some of which were presumably leased out.[11] Although the impressionistic evidence does not suggest so, urban rentals might have formed a substantial addition to elite incomes. Some other forms of wealth may even be hidden from view. And what is more, many of these forms of wealth require detailed study themselves. Business—the generic term used here to cover all non-agricultural economic activity—covers a wide spectrum indeed, from small workshops to large enterprises, from local production to goods traded with India. Although there can be no doubt this is not the place to offer a full survey of such business activities, that would provide too weak an excuse for ignoring the problem.

And a problem it is. The last word on the nature of elite wealth has not been spoken, despite years of vigorous argument. Papyrologists have brought up examples of members of the elite active in non-agricultural pursuits. However, the question is what such cases imply. In fact the subject forms an intellectual minefield.[12] It is directly related to the debate about the ancient economy. The mentality of the elite is regarded as one of the crucial determinants to evaluate the nature of the economy. In the eyes of M.I. Finley the negative attitude of members of the elite towards commerce in combination with their deliberate neglect of economic rationalism was responsible for the sepa-

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[9] As do e.g. Duncan-Jones (1990) 121-142, Bowman (1985) and Rowlandson (1996). Although in all fairness it should be immediately added that the purpose of these studies was explicitly limited to the study of landholding patterns, such discussions are all too easily mistaken for discussions of economic differentiation in general. Cf. Bagnall (1992a); as his own comments at 139-143 already imply, the comparison of distributions of landholdings among the landowners of Roman Egypt with economic differentiation in general in modern Honduras is inappropriate.

[10] As Bagnall (1992a) 128 admits with disarming straightforwardness.

[11] See e.g. *P.Ups.Frid.* (1981) 6 (273) for a house owned by a prominent Oxyrhynchite in which others lived; *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1693 (bef. 273 or 279) for a courtyard being leased out by an Oxyrhynchite gymnasiarch and councillor, or *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 911 (233 or 265) for half a share of a house being leased out by an Oxyrhynchite magistrate and councillor.

[12] For more battlefield terminology see Hopkins (1983a), an introduction to the related issue of the place of trade and traders in the ancient economy.

ration between capital and entrepreneurship that hampered economic development. Those who had the ideas had no access to the capital, whoever had the capital had no interest in the ideas.[13] The low social standing of the people involved in trade and crafts is a reflection of this separation.

It is an open question whether the separation between capital and entrepreneurship is as crucial a factor in the explanation of the lack of ancient economic development as Finley took it to be. For some scholars the status of traders has remained the key to the understanding of the nature of the ancient economy, for others it has turned out to be something of a non-starter.[14] What matters here is that there has been a ferocious debate about the extent of elite involvement in business that cannot be ignored.

Leaving aside the cruder forms of modernistic interpretations of elite involvement, there are at least three possible answers to the question what the economic role of elites was. The first answer is the primitivist position of which M.I. Finley was the main proponent: to argue that non-landed wealth remained confined to groups with low status because of the gulf that separated elite capital and non-elite entrepreneurship. For lack of substantial investments and the unwillingness of the elite to participate, non-agricultural production remained small scale. Members of the elite were certainly not averse to wealth, but they were interested in acquisition, not production. Traders were of low status and had no connections with members of the elite.

The second answer to the question of elite involvement in business constitutes a modified form of the modernist view. It does not deny the existence of an elite ideology that was averse to commercial activity, but holds that practice deviated from ideology. Land was the accepted form of wealth, but much of the riches with which land was obtained were acquired by other means. Because of ideological imperatives, much of these non-agricultural activities remain hidden

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[13] Finley (1985^{2}) 35-61. As Jongman (1988) 33-35 observed, Finley left the causal relationship between ideology and social and economic reality unclear. Did members of the elite not invest because they did not want to, or did their ideology follow social and economic reality?

[14] For an overview of the issues, Pleket (1983), repeated with elaborations in Pleket (1984), is fundamental. Pleket argues that the low standing of businessmen was of social, not of economic, importance. However, it is difficult to see how the separation of capital and entrepreneurship could have failed to have economic consequences. Jongman (1988) 32-35 pours cold water over the importance of the issue.

from view. The elite therefore engaged in business, but we obtain only occasional glimpses of their activities.

The third answer might be classified as a form of modified primitivism and steers a middle course between the first and the second answer. The non-landed income of the elite could be quite substantial, but landed and non-landed wealth were closely intertwined. Estates formed the basis of economic and social status, but the actual sources of income were much more varied. Business activities were diverse, but in one way or another always remained connected with agriculture.

In the case of the urban elites of Roman Egypt, all three answers should be seriously considered. It is not possible to discard any of the three *a priori*. This need not cause surprise, as the evidence is in itself not sufficient to make independent decisions. It is not merely a question of compiling a *catalogue raisonnée* of different forms of non-agricultural wealth and see where the evidence leads us. No matter how many examples are adduced of business activities, they cannot do without an interpretative framework. Theoretical considerations, not examples, should offer the solution. As it is rare to find explicit statements by scholars about the nature of elite wealth in Roman Egypt, it is useful to discuss each answer at some length.

The Urban Economy

To provide the proper context, it is necessary to first take a brief look at the urban economy. The aggregate production of the non-agricultural sector of the urban economy must have been quite substantial. Towns must have been bristling with business, full of workshops, markets, and shops.

Not only were levels of urbanisation remarkably high, it is also clear that in the towns the number of people who made a living from the land was small. As we saw in Part One Chapter One, levels of urbanisation in Roman Egypt were relatively high. One in five persons might have lived in towns. Because it is unlikely that more than a small proportion of the urban population worked on the lands surrounding the town, such high rates of urbanisation almost automatically imply a substantial amount of non-agricultural production.

This is indirectly corroborated by the available figures for urban landowners. As will be discussed later on in this chapter, in Hermo-

polis only slightly more than 2% of the urban population owned land. Even apart from the fact that half of these landowners owned too little land to make a living from, this is a very low proportion. Even if all urban landowners had large families, the majority of urban inhabitants still had to make a living in a non-agricultural way. Some of them will have been day-labourers, others urban craftsmen, working in their own workshops; we may posit the existence of an urban proletariat; many were employed in services. We have no clue about the value of the non-agricultural production of all these people, but it must have been quite substantial.[15]

In itself the existence of a large non-agricultural sector of the urban economy tells little about elite involvement. It is perfectly possible that all urban production was small-scale and did not need large investments. This situation is in fact the dominant picture in the sources. The papyri mention small, not large workshops, and individual workers, not labour-forces.[16] Elites may have been not involved at all. Nevertheless, the fact that the aggregate production of the non-agricultural sector is large presents, in an acute form, the question of elite involvement.

The Primitivist Position

According to the primitivist position, no matter how well developed urban production was, land remained the dominant form of wealth for members of the elite. They had no wish to invest in production, only a drive for enrichment through acquisition. Production remained small-scale, without a marked tendency towards technological improvements. This was a structural property of society, and a function of the high degree of social and economic differentiation.

Both the force and the weakness of such an argument is that it can hardly be subjected to proof. The argument cannot be tested on the basis of the evidence. Counter examples are easily rendered harmless by regarding them as exceptional. Of course there were traders and

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[15] In any case higher than Jones thought was the case in the later Roman Empire: Jones (1964) 465ff. His argument that only about 5% of production was non-agricultural was partly based on Egyptian evidence. For refutations, see Pleket (1983) 132 and (1984) 7-8 and esp. Garnsey (1996).

[16] For an overview of these and many other issues pertaining to urban manufacture, see van Minnen (1987).

craftsmen, and some of them might have grown exceptionally wealthy, but the norm was different. Social risers were usually only all too quick to adapt to elite ideology. The elite was and remained a land-owning elite.

Nevertheless, in the case of Roman Egypt, papyrologists have, with a healthy disregard of Finleyan dogmatism,[17] published examples of elite involvement in money lending, urban property, ownership of potteries and ship owning. There are several third-century examples to cite.[18] Members of the elite are frequently involved in lending money.[19] A councillor has a village house on lease for the weaving of linen.[20] In a letter two town councillors discuss a business transaction of 350 lamps.[21] A son of a magistrate invests with a partner in a business that is likely to be concerned with tin production.[22] An extremely wealthy Hermopolite family owns, apart from large tracts of land, a pottery.[23] A member of the Oxyrhynchite elite owns a house in which a freedman lives—a workplace or a shop?[24]

According to the primitivist position, elite ideology was averse from business. However, in the texts there is not a hint of shame or an attempt to conceal any of these activities. Nor are the activities confined to the lower reaches of the elite, or, more generally, to specific groups within the elite. The investor in the tin production may have

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17 Probably out of unawareness or disinterest, however. I have not encountered in the relevant editions any pertinent remarks about elite involvement.

18 One should be deleted. The apprenticeship contract *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2586 (264) has been taken by some (see Pleket (1998) 125) as evidence for direct elite involvement in the linen-production, because it is assumed that the apprentice is the *son* of a magistrate. However, the magistrate mentioned in the text is the grandfather, not the father of the apprentice. This may seem a trivial mistake, but the text implies that the father, who since he had a grown-up son (the prospective apprentice) must have been an adult, had not made it into the town council. Downward social mobility is therefore the most likely explanation for the fact that the son had to learn a trade. At any rate elite apprentices are further unparalleled; see the list of contracts in M. Bergamesco, *Aegyptus* 75 (1995) 95-167 with additions in *P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) p.182, and the discussion by Bradley (1991) 107-112 (though he considers the grandson to be of relatively high social standing *because* of the office of his grandfather).

19 *B.G.U.* 11 (1966) 2118 (223); *P.Fouad* 1 (1939) 52 (after March, 272); *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 70 (212-213); *P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293).

20 *P.Oxy.* 59 (1992) 3978 (249/250), a report of fire damage to the house by Aurelios Theon-Mounatios, councillor of Oxyrhynchos, and a Demestrios son of Theon.

21 *P.Select* (1965) 5 (3rd cent.).

22 *P.Köln* 2 (1978) 101 (274 or 280), following the editors' interpretation of Βρι-τανικὴ τέχνη.

23 *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (269).

24 *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235) lines 151-153, cf. lines 249-250.

been at the outer edge of the elite, perhaps.[25] However, the family that owned the pottery had landholdings that classified it among the richest families of Hermopolite society.[26] The councillor who had the weaving house on lease may have had a close relative who became president of the town council.[27] The money loans are even made by members of the Alexandrian elite.[28] Apparently, business activities formed part and parcel of the economic activity of the elite.

On the other hand, the examples are thin on the ground and, it should also be admitted, not spectacular. Owning a pottery or a workshop or two hardly qualifies as heavy involvement in business. There is not a hint of large-scale businesses producing for far away markets. It is certainly legitimate to argue that the examples cited do not point to widespread and structural elite involvement in business.

Such an argument, however, is not completely satisfactory. There can be no doubt that the major form of wealth was agricultural, but that is no reason to relegate the examples of business activity to the realm of the exceptional. They might be small-scale, but the fact that they were in an ideological sense unproblematic is of some importance. At least some modifications have to be made to the primitivist orthodoxy.

Revised Modernism

The question then is how far we should go in making modifications to the primitivist argument. At the other side of the spectrum of possibilities, adherents of what might be called the revised modernist position argue that the sources tell only part of the story. In the case of Roman Egypt, it is clear that the papyrological evidence focuses on

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[25] Assuming that in *P.Köln* 2 (1978) 101 (274 or 280) the father had gotten no further than one of the lower magistracies, and that the son, who is likely to have been an adult if he could engage in business, had no municipal career.

[26] El Abbadi (1975) on *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (268) calculates the holdings of the estate before division as 1092 arouras.

[27] Aurelios Theon-Mounatios, councillor in *P.Oxy.* 59 (1992) 3978 (249/250) and Aurelios Mounatios, former *agoranomos*, gymnasiarch, councillor and president in office of *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2569 (265). The editors of the former text suggest that both persons are identical, but in view of the diverging names it seems safer to assume they were members of the same family.

[28] The loan in *P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293) is made by the guardians of the minor heirs of an Alexandrian and Oxyrhynchite magistrate; in *P.Fouad* 1 (1939) 52 (after March, 272) by a very high-ranking Alexandrian and local magistrate.

land. Compared to land, we have relatively few sources on business, and that also pertains to business conducted below elite-levels. In itself this is testimony to the economic importance and the social value attached to land, but it also simply obscures the analysis of non-agricultural activity.

For it could be argued, as some have done, that a difference between ideology and practice existed.[29] Apart from their undoubted interests in land, the elite *did* in fact invest in business. As ownership of land was the only socially accepted form of wealth, members of the elite presented themselves as landowners, not as businessmen. For this reason, the evidence for involvement in non-agricultural production remains largely hidden from view. Further, it is also known that even in the most dogmatic statements of ancient writers about the desirable conduct of the imperial aristocracy, an exception is made for business conducted on a truly large scale. Behind agricultural appearances there may therefore have lurked a world full of business.

Methodologically, the argument is not without its dangers.[30] Trying to offer proof is difficult, for how can evidence be found when the argument is based on the premise that there is none? Adherents have put most energy in uncovering hidden business ties of members of the elite. They have tried to establish connections between members of the elite and persons engaged in non-agricultural activities. Such research comes in two varieties: one focuses on the elite persons themselves, the other on dependents ('agents') of such persons, most notably on their freedmen.

The prosopographical principles regarding the research into the business activities of members of the elite are simple. If the same name as that of a high-ranking person is met in business surroundings, it is assumed that the name refers to the same person, which therefore proves his involvement. It is clear that such identifications should meet some basic onomastical and chronological criteria. However, even if these criteria are met, in the absence of titles or further means of identification, absolute proof is usually impossible to provide. No matter how rigorous the criteria are applied, arguments from prosopography are bound to remain based on probability. On the one

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[29] Most notably by D'Arms (1981), esp. 1-20 with respect to the senatorial elite; but the idea is by no means confined to his work, see e.g. Pleket (1983), Veyne (1990) 42-46. Sophisticated applications to Roman Egypt are lacking, but crude variants of the idea can be found in many discussions.

[30] As Finley (1985^2) 193 was quick to point out.

hand they are difficult to refute, for the realm of the possible is large indeed. However, neither are they likely to convert the disbelievers. It is well known that prosopographical identifications are as easily ventured as they are brushed aside.

Somewhat similar problems pertain to the identification of straw men and agents. There has been a natural tendency to focus on freedmen, because they would qualify best for the job. Sometimes slaves learned a trade, and they were frequently engaged in the business of their masters. It would be only too natural if such practices continued after manumission. Again, there are some difficulties of identification. Not all freedmen cared to mention their servile background (most would rather not), and even when they did, it is not always easy to identify their patrons. In Roman Egypt, freedmen status, contrary to the situation in the western half of the empire, cannot be inferred from the name itself, but depends solely on the explicit mention that someone is a freedman. Often freedmen do not mention the name of their patron at all, and, if they do, this remains usually confined to a single name, which impedes identification. However, the fundamental problem goes deeper: it is the degree of dependency. Even if it is possible to find freedmen conducting large-scale businesses, it still needs to be demonstrated that their patrons were involved. The fact that freedmen after manumission often remained tied in one way or another to their patrons, does not necessarily imply that the freedmen who engaged in business were acting as straw men for their masters. Indeed, there are famous examples outside Egypt of wealthy independent freedmen.[31]

However, despite the shaky methodology followed by its adherents, the argument itself that there is a discrepancy between ideology and practice cannot be brushed aside so easily. The crucial point is that there are examples attested of pre-industrial societies where the elite puts a premium on landownership, and purports to stand above anything that reeks of profit making, but nevertheless actively engages in business.[32] As always with comparative evidence, such examples do in themselves suggest nothing about the organisation of Roman society. They do not create facts, but suggest possibilities. However, there is no intrinsic reason why a similar situation could not apply to Roman society.

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[31] Garnsey (1981).
[32] D’Arms (1980) 1-11.

What we need, then, are non-prosopographical routes to test the possibility that the elite engaged in business. Instead of accumulating examples of individual ties that remain mere possibilities, it is better to focus on one specific part of the economy. In the case of Roman Egypt, there is one such area that lends itself to analysis: the trade with India. This forms an excellent test case. Such gigantic sums were spent in the trade with India that the question of elite involvement is all but inescapable. If ever there is a possibility to demonstrate elite involvement, it is here.

Egypt played an important role in the trade with India. From some Egyptian ports at the Red Sea, large numbers of ships sailed to Arabia, Africa and especially India. They brought back many exotic goods. From the Red Sea ports, these were transported through the desert along routes flanked by military stations and water-places, to towns along the Nile: Antinoopolis, Apollonopolis Magna and, most notably, Koptos. There they were shipped into Nile boats and transported downstream to Alexandria, from which the goods were distributed over the rest of the Roman Empire.[33]

There can be no doubt that in the Roman period the volume of this trade was substantial.[34] Famously, Pliny wrote that there was an annual drain of 100 million sesterces to India, China and Arabia, elsewhere specified as 55 million to India alone.[35] The effects of the many exotic goods that were brought back from the trips to India are visible in society. In Egypt, spices are mentioned in texts originating from the tiniest villages.[36]

The question is how this trade was financed. Information is scarce, but a papyrus from the middle of the second-century listing goods imported from India mentions a stunning detail. It states that the total value of one particular shipload was 1,154 talents and 2,852 drachmas.[37] While there is some debate about what the sum exactly repre-

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[33] See Casson (1989) for a conveniently brief description of the routes, *I.Portes* (1984) for the *portes du desert* along the Nile and Sidebotham (1986) for the routes from these to the Red Sea ports.

[34] For the wider setting of the trade of the Roman Empire with its eastern neighbours, see Jones (1974) 140-150 or Raschke (1978), though the latter is overburdened by 1791 notes and 285 pages of bibliography, addenda and indices—symptomatic perhaps of the oversized *A.N.R.W.*-series in general.

[35] Pl., *N.H.* 6.101 and 12.84, all, predictably, part of moralistic argumentation. See Veyne (1979).

[36] Raschke (1975) 243-245; Raschke (1978) 650-676, though pointing out that some may have been grown locally.

[37] *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13167 V° (mid 2nd cent.) lines 27-29.

sents, there is no doubt at all about its value: it was huge by any standard.[38] The almost 7 million drachmas were equivalent to seven times the minimum fortune required of a senator. At contemporary prices, it would enable someone in Egypt to buy more than 23,000 arouras of land, a figure beyond the imagination of even the wealthiest landowner of the towns of Roman Egypt.[39]

Independent of the question how the India trade was organised, it is clear that the financiers must have been extremely wealthy to engage in such enterprise. They should be located among the wealthiest parts of Alexandrian society, or even among the senatorial aristocracy. This creates interesting problems. Either we assume the existence of a separate merchant class of extremely wealthy merchants, or we have to assume elite involvement in commerce after all.[40] The latter of the two is probably the most economical hypothesis, but whatever the outcome, it runs directly counter to the primitivist position.

There is in fact some evidence from an unexpected corner about the financiers of the trade with India. Among the massive gifts showered by the emperor Constantine on the church at the beginning of the fourth century, five Egyptian properties are mentioned that were assigned to the church of St. Peter. Two of them were in the suburbs of Alexandria, three of them in the suburbs of the otherwise unknown 'Armenia' (perhaps Hermonthis). At least three of these properties have every characteristic of being heavily involved in the trade with India. Pepper, saffron, cassia spices, nard-oil and balsam are all mentioned, in large quantities.[41] The sums involved must again have been huge. Neither structurally nor in terms of monetary value do these properties resemble anything we know of the estates of local elites of the Egyptian towns. Even apart from the sums involved, the fact that the properties ended up in the emperor's hands would be sufficient testimony to the high status of its owners. They were clearly in the hands of the wealthiest parts of society, in all likelihood Alexandrians. It does not seem far-fetched to suppose that owners of such properties were the financiers of the trade with India.

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[38] Cf. Hopkins (1995/1996) 59 n.75 and Casson (1989) 35.

[39] Hopkins (1995/1996) 59 for more such comparisons. For contemporary price-levels, see Drexhage (1991); I have set—somewhat arbitrarily—land at 300 dr./ar. The wealthiest families known own lands in the order of 1,000-1,500 arouras.

[40] Likewise Hopkins (1983b) and (1995/1996) 59. It is amusing to consider which outcome Finley would have preferred.

[41] *Liber pontificalis* 34 (Silvester) 20.

But who were these financiers? It is futile to try to speculate on the identity of the owners of the individual properties, but it is time to look more closely at the identity of those involved in the India trade. It seems clear that not all Red Sea traders were member of any elite.[42] Many, in fact, were outsiders: people from Palmyra, or Aden, or even India itself.[43] There is some evidence, mainly from the literary tradition, that suggests the existence of wealthy traders with intimate connections with the elite.[44] There are also indications of the presence of dependents (agents?) of high-placed persons in the Red Sea ports, though scholars have been all too willing to interpret even the slightest indications in their favour.[45]

The best evidence comes from along the Nile itself. One inscription erected in Koptos presents a councillor, either of Alexandria or

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[42] For the (generally low) status of traders in Roman Egypt in general, see H.-J. Drexhage, *Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte* 10 (1991) 28-46. The first-century writer/merchant of a handbook for the Red Sea trade must have had some literate education to be able to write his work, but this does not automatically imply elite membership, and this is not suggested either by the generally plain style of the work, see Casson (1989) 10.

[43] E.g. Xen.Eph. 3.11.2 for an Indian ruler (with the not so Indian name Psammis ...) coming to Alexandria and doing business with Alexandrian merchants. Epiphanios of Salamis, *Panarion* 66.1.6-3.15 relates a wonderful (hostile) story how Mani acquired his fortune from a wealthy trader with India who fell in love with a beautiful prostitute in Hypsele.

[44] S.H.A., *Firmus* 3 briefly describes the immense wealth of a Firmus who traded on a frequent basis with India. His high status is implied by the fact that he seized Alexandria in an (abortive) attempt to gain the throne. See *P.Bingen* (2000) 113 p.452-454 for further discussion. The *Historia Monachorum in Aegypto* 14 (Life of Paphnoutios) 19-20 has a conversion story of an Alexandrian trader who deals in "business worth 20,000 solidi", and comes downstream from the Upper Thebaid "with a 100 ships". The (highly inflated) numbers and the itinerary suggest he engaged in trade with India.

[45] For a classic case of the latter, see A. Fuks, *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 5 (1951) 207-216 on a man named Markos Ioulios Alexandros in the Nikanor archive, the ostraca of one Koptite family of tradesmen who conducted business with the Red Sea Ports. Supposedly he was a brother of the prefect Tiberios Ioulios Alexandros. The identification is 'generally accepted' according to Raschke (1978) 646, see e.g. also Sidebotham (1986) 84-85. Fuks also made much of other 'firms' mentioned in the Nikanor archive. However, it has been shown that the business of Nikanor and his family was primarily if not solely concerned with the feeding of the population living in the Egyptian Red Sea ports (which were dependent on outside imports), not with the trade with India (see briefly Casson (1989) 13-14, full argumentation by K. Ruffing, *Münstersche Beiträge zur antiken Handelsgeschichte* 12 (1993) 1-26). It is not clear what the interest of high-placed persons—whether organised in firms or not—could be in such small trade. The ostraca of *O.Ber.* 1 (2000) present a somewhat different picture: at least some goods mentioned there were loaded into ships, though the quantities were again very small. The identity of the persons involved remains in any case elusive; for an onomastic profile see *O.Ber.* 1 (2000) p.24-32.

Koptos, who stated he was involved in the Red Sea trade.[46] (In ancient parlance the Red Sea extended all the way to India). Another inscription, from a temple located to the south of Koptos, tells of two women of high status—without doubt Alexandrians—who describe themselves as Red Sea traders and ship owners.[47] These two inscriptions are remarkable. They belong to the prized category of actual testimonies to elite interests in large-scale business. The fact that it was advertised on stone shows that ideological aversion to trade was not complete or universal.

If connections with Red Sea trade were advertised locally, they can hardly have remained a secret for the members of the local elites. This creates problems in the assessment of their behaviour. It is unsatisfactory to accept on the one hand involvement of the Alexandrian elite in the trade with India, but on the other hand to create an ideological gap between the Alexandrian elite and the local elite. Given the close connections between the two and the cultural and ideological model that the one formed for the other, it would not be unlikely if their behavior found imitators. Members of local elites will not have financed the larger sums, and it is to be kept in mind that the goods only passed through their towns. However, this does not exclude substantial possibilities for enrichment, and they may have participated all the same. It seems hard to accept that the members of local elites closed their eyes as the boats filled with their extremely valuable cargo passed their towns. We can easily think of involvement in *portes du désert* like Koptos, for example in the transfer over land to the Red Sea ports.

The problem, however, is that the evidence remains completely silent about such involvement. The major towns of Middle Egypt, Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis, are so well covered by the papyrological evidence that it would be perverse to suggest that despite the silence of the sources their elites engaged actively in the trade with India. There is not a shred of evidence amidst the thousands of papyri.

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[46] *I.Portes* (1984) 90 (ca 260), with *S.E.G.* 34 (1984) 1587 for a dedication by an Arios-S[---]. The inscription is fragmentary, but βουλευτής (councillor) and [ἐ]ρυθραικός (Red Sea) are read with certainty, making a connection with Red Sea trade inescapable. The remarkable combination was left uncommented by Bernand, which given his interest in the epigraphy as a reflection of Red Sea trade is odd.

[47] *S.E.G.* 8 (1937) 703 (2nd-3rd cent.): two *matronae stolatae* (a high title for which see Holtheide (1980)) who are ναύκληροι κα[ὶ] [ἔμπο]ροι (Red Sea shipowners and traders), with Sidebotham (1986) 86-88.

The only correct interpretation of the silence of the sources must be that the silence is real: there was no such involvement.

The *portes du désert* are not covered by the evidence in the same way as Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchos or Hermopolis, but it is an understatement to say that evidence is absent. In the case of Koptos, we possess ostraca from both ends of the route to the Red Sea. No evidence indicates elite involvement. The inscriptions that were found in Koptos might on a favourable interpretation be seen as the product of an elite with business interests, but hard evidence is in almost all cases lacking. None of the papyri from Antinoopolis indicates any connection with the Red Sea either.

As a consequence we are faced with difficult choices. Either we create a rift between the behaviour of the Alexandrian and the local elites which in view of the social and ideological relations between the two is not likely. Or we accept involvement of the local elites in trade for which we have no evidence. It is impossible to decide which is correct.

The outcome is thus meagre. Even when we stretch the argument to its limits, we still do not reach the point where we want to arrive. We can make inferences about the likelihood of the imitation of the behaviour of the Alexandrian elite by local luminaries, but this forms no more than a possibility for which there is no solid evidence. Involvement of the local elites in business remains by and large hypothetical.

Middle Ground

The third and last possible answer is that there was elite involvement in business, but that the activities were connected to the estates.[48] The economy remained fundamentally agricultural, but the agricultural economy was relatively complex.

There can be no doubt that such an argument offers a useful interpretation of most business activities of the local elites of third-century Egypt. Money was put on loan for agricultural purposes. Potteries produced jars used for transport of the wine produced on the estate. The ships members of the elite owned were used to transport it. And

[48] See for this view esp. Bowman (1996^2) 90-120; also Rathbone (1991).

so on. Many of the business activities of the elites can in one way or another be connected to their estate.

The production of pottery is a good example.[49] It is known that some members of the elite owned potteries.[50] These produced simple jars used as containers for wine, as distinct from the finer earthenware produced for other purposes. The potteries were leased out to potters, some of them independent, some tied in some form of dependency to the owners.[51] The output of these potteries was impressive: each could produce many thousands of jars a year.[52] The potteries were located on the estates of the owners, sometimes near the vineyards for which they produced their jars.[53] It is therefore clear that the production was geared primarily to the needs of the owner's estate. But that is not all. We have no specific information about the size of the estates of individual pottery owners, but the numbers of jars produced are so large that they easily exceeded the needs of the estates.[54] Of other estates it is known that they bought their jars from outside.[55] This suggests that

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[49] Cockle (1981) is fundamental for what follows.

[50] For elite owners of potteries see: *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) 8 (316 A.D) (the heirs of a deceased magistrate); *S.B.* 20 (1997) 14300 (324) (an Oxyrhynchite pottery owned by an Antinoite councillor); *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (269) line 100 (the heirs of an extremely wealthy Alexandrian); *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255) and 3597 (260) (daughter and son of the same elite family).

[51] Independent potters: *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3595 (243). Dependency: *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255) and 3597 (260) with Cockle (1981) 92. The lessee in *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) 8 (316 A.D) is a magistrate and related by marriage to the owners of the pottery. He undoubtedly did not intend to make jars himself.

[52] This can be inferred from the number of jars that the potters had to sell annually to the owner (by way of rent). *P.Tebt.* 2 (1907) 342 (late 2nd cent): sale of 2,000 jars (in addition to a rent of several hundreds jars). *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3595 (243): sale of 15,000 + 150 + 150 jars of specified types. *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255): sale of 4,000 + 100 + 15 jars of specified types produced by one fourth of a pottery (hence to be multiplied by 4). *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3597 (260): sale of 8,000 + 100 + 30 jars of specified types produced by one third of a pottery (hence to be multiplied by 3). The last two mentioned might refer to the same pottery, though the totals work out differently. *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) 8 (316 A.D): rent of 1,200 jars.

[53] *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3595-3597: on the estate. *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) 8 (316 A.D): in a vineyard near a village. *S.B.* 20 (1997) 14300 (324): near a village.

[54] Cockle (1981) 96 calculates (with some hesitation) on the basis of data of yields in modern Egypt that the 15,000 jars of *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3595 (243) could hold 291,500 litres of wine. With one aroura of vineyards producing 933 litres 312 arouras of vineyards were needed to fill all jars. In the light of Jongman (1988) 132 this estimate seems high, but even if lowered to more modest levels it is clear that the jars cannot have been filled with estate wine only. The estates of the wealthier members of the elite easily exceeded the 100 arouras, but in the absence of agricultural specialisation it is most unlikely that they were fully planted with vines.

[55] Rathbone (1991) 167: estate potters are absent in the Heroninos archive; the archive shows frequent purchases of hundreds of jars.

surplus produce was sold to other estate owners. This, in turn, implies somewhat more complex forms of economic interaction.

It would not be productive to continue the examples. The general impression is that almost all attested elite business was in some way or another related to agriculture in the wider sense. Although not all activities were agriculture-related to the same degree, there is little evidence for economic activities that remained entirely separate from estate interests. All attested activities point to significant economic interaction, either with other estate owners, or with the state, or with tradesmen. This was a pre-industrial agricultural economy of some complexity.

In essence the economic behaviour of the elite remained dominated by agriculture. We should grant that victory to the primitivists. However, when the dust of the battlefield has settled, it appears that the victory is not complete. Statements about the fundamentally agricultural nature of the Roman economy are not really meaningful in many contexts. Of course ancient elites remained genuinely interested in the ownership of land. Elites of most if not all pre-industrial societies did, and kept doing so long after processes of modernisation began to make significant inroads in Europe. Such statements are meaningful in the sense that they show what the ancient economy was not. They help to establish the norm, but do not help in understanding the peculiarities of the society under consideration.

What is more helpful is to understand the business activities that we find as largely estate-related. There are hardly any business activities that were entirely non-agricultural. On the one hand, it helps to understand the complexity of economic interaction; on the other hand, it puts useful limits on the range of possible economic ventures.

The implications are somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, as the relation between business and agriculture was relatively close, it seems likely that by and large non-agricultural activities were in line with agricultural activities. Landholdings might therefore be regarded as a reasonably good indicator of general economic standing. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that land tells only part of the story.

Landed Wealth

There was more to elite wealth than just arouras. Nevertheless, land remains the best starting point for the analysis of economic differen-

tiation. If most economic activities were in some sense estate-related, property holdings form at least a dim reflection of economic differentiation.

In conceptualising property relations, we may envisage a tripartite structure of landowners: villagers, the inhabitants of the towns, and Alexandrians. In the case of villagers, the holdings would normally be located around their own village, in scattered plots of small size. The families themselves would work the land, or the land would be leased out, usually to co-villagers. Urban landowners held their holdings all over the nome, which meant in practice that they had their plots located in the territories of several villages. Holdings could be very dispersed; it was therefore quite normal for an urban landowner to own plots in villages scattered all over the nome. The holdings of urban landowners were usually leased out. Alexandrians form the last category of landowners. As Alexandria had no territory to speak of, the holdings of the Alexandrian landowners must of necessity have been located throughout the nomes of Egypt. The holdings could be confined to a single nome, but especially in the case of very wealthy Alexandrians they could also be much more widely dispersed, comprising several nomes. In the latter case the estates could be very large, and it is here that forms of central estate management are more easily detected.

Much of the land was leased out, though in the case of the more substantial holdings other labour relations can also be found.[56] Practices of leasing could be complex. Land was not only leased by the landless poor, but could also be (sub-)leased by quite prosperous owners of land, even extending to the level of the urban elites. So, we find not only villagers leasing land, but also urban inhabitants, even councillors.[57]

Each plot, each estate, and each owner presumably has a particular story to tell. Plots could be of different quality and be put to different uses. They could be classified differently, and hence be taxed differently. They could be cultivated efficiently, or left in neglect. Owners

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[56] For which see Rathbone (1991).

[57] By villagers from councillors: e.g. *P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2137 (226); *P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2795 (250); *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3802 (296); *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 41 (223/224); *S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7814 (256) (a dove-cote). By urban inhabitants from councillors: *P.Mich.* 11 (1971) 610 (282). By councillors from urban landowners: *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2584 (211). Between members of the elite: *P.S.I.* 13 (1949-1953) 1330 (after March 272); *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 269 (late 3rd cent.) (a grove of palm-dates).

or supervisors could take little or much interest in the management of the estate. Bookkeeping practices could vary and hence the efficiency of the management.[58] Even when estates were of exactly the same size, both the monetary value of the land and the income derived from it could therefore differ.

In order to analyse the distribution of the estates among the population, a birds-eye view is needed. The finer points of detail are thereby lost. As we have no information about the monetary value of individual estates or the income derived from them, there is no real alternative but to compare the size of holdings. This is not really problematic, as long as we realise that an analysis of landholding size offers only one way to study economic differentiation. When it comes to the value or income of the estate, the ranking of individual owners might have been different. Estate size forms just one of the possible indicators, but it is the only one we possess.

Individually attested figures show a wide range of property holdings, though usually the figures are relatively low. This is hardly surprising, as most individually attested figures concern only part of the property. Many figures originate from leases, and it is most unlikely that whole estates were leased out at once. Even the higher range of the attested figures will have concerned only part of the estate.[59] The same might apply to the figures found in sales contracts;[60] we have usually no idea whether these concerned complete estates, and in many cases it seems likely that they did not.

For our purposes, it does not really matter of course what specific individuals owned. No matter how much effort is put in estimating the value of the estate of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, or in assembling scattered data about other individual estates, we need to obtain a sense of economic differentiation in general. Evidence for structures of landowning at specific periods in specific towns must be turned into general statements.

In order to create a model of urban landownership, information about three factors is necessary. First of all, we need to know what proportion of the urban population owned land. In practice, this means that we must find a figure for the absolute number of landown-

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[58] Compare the methods described by Rathbone (1991) with those of *P.Kellis* 4 (1997).

[59] Higher figures include e.g. 34 arouras in *P.Oxy.* 61 (1995) 4121 (289/290); 22 arouras in *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 41 (223/224).

[60] E.g. half of 25 11/16 arouras in *P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3498 (274).

ers, and, in order to evaluate the proportion they formed of the total population, an estimate for population size. Secondly, the distribution of holdings among the urban owners must be studied. How many owners owned how much land? Thirdly, the gender of the urban owners must be analysed. It is clear that men dominated, but there is also enough evidence for female owners. We need to analyse what proportion of women could be found among the landowners, and whether the distribution of their holdings was similar to the general distribution.

There are many land registers that offer the type of serial data that is needed.[61] Generally speaking such registers come in two types. The first, which is the most important for us but is also the least frequently attested, is formed by registers of urban owners, listing their holdings in the whole of the nome. The second, more frequent in occurrence but less easy to use, is formed by registers of specific villages. These usually list not only the holdings of villagers, but also the holdings of the urban landowners in that particular area.

These registers have their origin in the process of taxation. Land was extensively taxed, though at a relatively low rate compared to rents. A bewildering array of taxes was levied, according to the use of the land, its type and its quality. An elaborate system of categorisation was used. Land could be classified as grain land, vineyards or orchards, as public, temple or private land, as inundated and uninundated, or as productive or unproductive. To keep track of all this, it was necessary to make at regular intervals lists of owners and of their holdings, to measure land, make extensive descriptions, and categorise it. Given the frequency with which land changed hands this was a major activity of the local administration.

How reliable were such registers? One may wonder about the accuracy of the Egyptian record keeping, especially when it comes to the minute fractions of arouras that are so meticulously recorded in the registers. Mistakes or fraud can sometimes be detected in the sources.[62] However, the tension between overdeclaring and underdeclaring is likely to have fostered a generally reliable system. It might have been tempting to register the ownership of too many holdings, but it was also tempting to declare too little for tax purposes.

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[61] For the main registers from the Roman period, see Bagnall (1992a), with an addition in Bagnall (2002).

[62] Rowlandson (1996) 100 for some examples.

All registers have their own problems of interpretation, if only for the fact that long texts have an irritating tendency not to survive completely.[63] But as so often, that is not the main problem. Irrespective of the quality, taken together they constitute a highly disparate series of data. They originate from different places, describe different types of land, and stem from different periods. It is far from easy to determine whether local variation, mere statistical flukes, or chronological change explains the differences between them. Registers may seem about as objective a document as one can possibly imagine, merely reporting facts. But despite appearances, the data certainly do *not* speak for themselves. They need a framework.

In the case of the study of *urban* landholding patterns, the problem is complicated because we depend for much of our information on a single source. Most of the registers concern villages, whereas the evidence for urban holdings is slight. For the towns, there is one register whose quality towers above the rest. This is a Hermopolite register dating to the middle of the fourth century. In the study of urban patterns of landholding, the main question is how representative this Hermopolite register is.

The Number of Urban Landowners

The first question to ask is how many urban landowners there were, and what proportion of the population they formed. Even if we award all owners of land with families, in any settlement, and that includes the truly rural ones, there always remained a part of the population that did *not* own land.

The question what proportion of the total population consisted of landowners has been almost completely ignored in discussions of patterns of landholding, but it is of real interest. In an analysis of distribution of ownership, the people who own nothing should be taken into account. The importance lies in the comparative value. Suppose

[63] An extreme example is provided by *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 9 (309), analysed by Bagnall (1992a) 132-136 and tables 1-2. Despite the elaborate efforts of Bagnall, only slightly over half of the entries yield reliable information. Bagnall uses averages for the remaining half, but this stretches the limits of acceptability. The choice in this case is whether we should limit ourselves to the complete entries, or use (as Bagnall does) averages for the incomplete ones, or simply discard the data altogether. None of these options is fully satisfactory.

we make a comparison between the distributions of land in two settlements. As long as the proportion of owners to the total population remains the same, there is little to worry about. However, if this is not the case, problems arise. Statements that in both communities 10% of the landowners own 50% of land lose their comparative value when owners made up different proportions of the population concerned. In order to make meaningful comparisons, we have to analyse the distribution of ownership among the *total* community, not just of those who own the land. In other words, we have to include cases of non-ownership.[64]

The non-owning part of the population is not always easy to estimate, because this requires simultaneous knowledge about two figures that are usually not easy to obtain independently of each other: population size and number of landowners. Where registers of land survive, we can obtain a fairly good idea of how many landowners there were, but we do not know how many persons fell outside the group of owners. For the few towns for which reliable estimates of population size are available, we usually do not have any idea of the number of landowners.

There is, however, one town where such a calculation can be made. In the case of Hermopolis estimates for both landowners and for population size can be produced.[65] These two estimates are derived independently from each other. One register of land dating to the middle of the fourth century lists 243 landowners living in the Western Citadel Quarter.[66] With four quarters of roughly equal size, we may set the total number of landowners of the whole town of Hermopolis at the conveniently round figure of 1,000.[67] The group of

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[64] I owe this idea to Keith Hopkins and Wim Jongman. The problem remains without discussion in Duncan-Jones (1990) 121-142, Bowman (1985) and Bagnall (1992a). Note that all the graphs in Bagnall (1992a) speak of 'population', instead of 'landowners'—an insignificant but telling slip. Sharp (1999) 169 offers a discussion but seems unaware of its importance.

[65] In fact, as far as I am aware, Hermopolis is the only town in the Roman world for which the proportion of the population that consisted of landowners can be estimated with a reasonable degree of certainty.

[66] Bowman (1985) table 1b on *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F.Herm. (after 346/347), including incomplete entries. Note that 'owners' are here defined as entries, not as persons. As in some entries more than one person occurs, the actual number of owners is somewhat higher. However, as the total figure is obtained by rounding, there is little point in being more precise.

[67] As was stated in the previous chapter, the two quarters of which we know the number of *oikiai* show variation in size. But we know only the name of one quarter.

landowners will have consisted predominantly of adult males, but the figure of 1,000 also includes a smaller number of women and an unknown though undoubtedly high number of minors due to the high levels of mortality. In the previous chapter, the total number of inhabitants in the second half of the third century was estimated at slightly above 45,000 persons.[68] This high figure is corroborated by the large size of the nome.

If the numbers for landowners and population size are even broadly correct, the implication is that only a tiny minority of the inhabitants of Hermopolis owned land. The estimates for inhabitants and landowners result in a percentage of 2% of the urban population. This is a surprisingly low figure, and forms a sobering corrective for an all too ready equation between the distribution of landholdings and general economic differentiation. Of all the residents of Hermopolis, only 2 in 100 owned land, and by consequence 98, or the great majority of the population, did not. Small increases in the number of landowners—for example to 1200—would have almost no effect on the outcome. And increasing the estimate for the total population only leads to an even lower outcome than the one obtained here.

It may be objected that the age distribution of landowners and that of the total urban population was not the same, because the group of landowners consisted predominantly of adult males. It would therefore be more appropriate to compare the figure of landowners with adult males or with heads of households than with the total urban population. However, the register includes women and minors, and there are cases known where members of the same household are listed separately in the register. The total urban population therefore forms the best comparandum. Nevertheless, even if we were to suppose that each landowner supported a different household—in some cases manifestly untrue—, 12% of all households owned land while the great majority of the population, 88%, did not.[69] No matter how the calculation is made, the conclusion is inescapable that the majority of urban inhabitants did not own land.

For other towns it is impossible to offer similar calculations. The question is therefore to what extent the Hermopolite figure of 2% is applicable to the other towns of Roman Egypt. Hermopolis was one of its largest towns, which might imply that the situation in smaller

[68] Alternatively, with *oikia* referring to house, a population of 58,800.
[69] 1,000 landholders with 5.4 av. size household: 12% of a population of 45,000.

towns was different from that of Hermopolis. In the absence of direct evidence, a comparison with the two extremes of the spectrum of settlements is instructive. The proportions of owners in the villages and in Alexandria show that a negative correlation exists between settlement size and proportion of landowners, and the same principle may have applied as well to the smaller and larger towns of Roman Egypt.

As always, Alexandria formed a category of its own. We lack any substantial information about the number of Alexandrian landowners. However, it is certain that the Hermopolite percentage of 2% of urban landowners cannot have applied. As was discussed in Part One Chapter One, the population of Alexandria is usually estimated between 200,000 and 600,000 inhabitants. With a percentage of 2% of owners, there would be 4,000 to 12,000 Alexandrian owners of land. Such figures seem far too high. Even if we allow for a substantial number of Alexandrians of more modest means who held land in the immediate vicinity of Alexandria (and therefore are hidden from our view), we are still left with a far too large group of owners who held their land in the nomes. With 40 to 50 such nomes and even with a relatively high presence of Alexandrians in each,[70] in any reasonable calculation there still would be too many Alexandrians left unaccounted for. This suggests strongly that the actual proportion of landowners was lower. Although far too many uncertainties exist to be able to offer an even remotely reliable estimate, it seems probable that the proportion of landholders was lower in Alexandria than in Hermopolis.

At the other end of the spectrum of settlements, some registers of land of the larger Fayum villages indicate that the number of landowners was in the order of 100-200. It is generally agreed that the population of these larger villages consisted of a couple of thousands inhabitants, usually below the 5,000 mark. If these numbers are even roughly right, the matrix of possibilities suggests a proportion of landowners in the order of 5%. This is higher than the Hermopolite

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[70] The number of wealthy Alexandrian landowners seems to have varied from nome to nome. As will appear from the arguments presented in the next chapter, it is intrinsically likely that there were more Alexandrians in larger nomes. There were relatively many in Oxyrhynchos and Koptos, but surprisingly few in Hermopolis. At a guess, I would say that in the third century there were even in Oxyrhynchos less than 20 wealthy Alexandrians at any time. As Oxyrhynchos had a large share of Alexandrians and was a large nome, this would suggest that the *average* per nome was substantially below that figure. It should also be taken into account that some Alexandrians found in one nome will have been identical with those found in another, as some held land in more than one nome.

figure, but it is remarkable how difficult it is to raise the figure, even to the level of 10%. It is important to realise that raising the population estimates—the most obvious possibility for data massaging—only decreases the outcome. Villages thus seem to have had a higher proportion of landowners than a large town like Hermopolis. This is just what we would expect, given their rural character. What is more remarkable is that even in villages the proportion of landowners was still fairly low.

What can we conclude? On the basis of the preceding categories it seems probable that there exists an inverse correlation between landowners and population size. Even with all the uncertainties involved in the calculations, it seems likely that the proportion of landowners decreases with increases in settlement size. Larger villages held about 5% of landowners, the large town of Hermopolis 2%, Alexandria a lower percentage. The larger the settlement, the larger the proportion of the population without land.

This inverse correlation would also suggest that smaller towns contained proportionally more landowners than the 2% found in Hermopolis. However, the proportions obtained for the large villages are all rather low and stand relatively close to those for Hermopolis, so it seems likely that the scope for variation between towns was limited. While it is certainly possible that smaller towns had a somewhat higher proportion of owners than Hermopolis, dramatic differences between large and small towns are therefore unlikely. In that sense, the figure of 2% forms a good guide to the situation in the other towns.

Hermopolite Distribution Patterns

Next, the distribution of holdings among the urban owners should be discussed. The most important evidence is formed by the same Hermopolite register that supplied the figure for the number of owners. It presents a complete list of the landowners in one of Hermopolis' four quarters.[71] Its precise date is unknown, but on the basis of prosopographical identifications it is certain that it belongs to the middle of the

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[71] *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F.Herm. (after 346/347). Both data and analysis are taken over from Bowman (1985), Bagnall (1992a) and (1993) 68ff.; cf. also Rowlandson (1996) 120ff.

fourth century.[72] For each landholder, the name is given, usually without further status designation. This is followed by the holdings of private and public land, of which the totals per district (in fourth-century terminology, *pagus*) are given.

For several reasons, the data from this register are the most reliable for our purposes, but they are still not perfect. The register does not record all landholdings of the residents of Hermopolis, but only those held in the Hermopolite nome. It would not be too surprising if Hermopolites owned a substantial proportion of the Antinoopolite land, which after all had only recently been carved out of its own nome.[73] Conversely, we do not obtain a picture of general patterns of landholding in the Hermopolite nome. Although the Hermopolite holdings of Antinoites are listed (in a separate list), the holdings of villagers in the nome are absent, and the same applies to absentee landholders not resident in Hermopolis, such as Alexandrians. One district, the seventh *pagus*, which seems to be located near to the town, is mysteriously absent.

How do these deficiencies affect the analysis of the distribution of holdings? The number of owners from other towns is uncertain, but by definition they do not affect the distribution curve of Hermopolites. The fact that holdings of non-resident Alexandrians are not listed is potentially dangerous, for it only needs a few extremely wealthy individuals to skew the picture.[74] However, by happy coincidence the number of Alexandrians who held land in the Hermopolite nome seems to have been relatively small.[75] In terms of urban owners, we have about one-fourth of all Hermopolite holders, which seems large enough to qualify as a representative sample.[76] In terms of the absolute size of their holdings, we are dealing with minimum figures, but the difference with the real holdings will have been small. The amounts of land missing in the seventh *pagus* and the Antinoopolite nome cannot have been large in proportion to the total amount of land

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[72] See the bibliography in *B.L.* 8.

[73] This possibility has never been canvassed, but should be taken serious.

[74] This problem is ignored in the nome model of Bagnall (1992a).

[75] This is indirectly shown by the fact that the number of Hermopolite councillors with double councillorship is small. Compare the list of Hermopolite councillors of Calderini (1951) with the list of Alexandrian councillors in Delia (1991) 159-161. Also otherwise relatively few Alexandrians occur in the Hermopolite nome.

[76] Strictly speaking it is not sample size, but the quality of the data that matters. But there is little to judge the quality except for its size.

owned, and what is more important, we have no reason to believe that these plots were distributed in a radically different mode.

TABLE 1.3.1 HERMOPOLITE DISTRIBUTION PATTERNS

Source: *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F.Herm. (after 346/347) with Bowman (1985) 159.

AROURAS	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
0-9	97	19	116
10-19	40	8	48
20-29	18	3	21
30-39	8	-	8
40-49	7	-	7
50-79	7	-	7
80-99	6	-	6
100-199	9	2	11
200-499	3	3	6
500-...	8	-	8
Total	203	35	238

The Hermopolis story has been told before. The main patterns of distribution can be seen in Table 1.3.1. What is immediately apparent is that there was a large group of owners of small landholdings. If, following conventional wisdom, 10 arouras of land were required to feed a family, it can be seen in Table 1.3.1 that almost half of all the landowners owned too little land to support a family. Many of this group even owned substantially less, often less than five arouras, and sometimes even less than one aroura. As we will see soon, the occurrence of such a group at a relatively late date, by the middle of the fourth century, is remarkable. Moreover, the existence of smallholders is not unexpected, but their presence in such large numbers in an urban context certainly is. This group should not be regarded as consisting of poor urban peasants. Many of the small plots were located too far from town to allow daily commuting. Further, the number of smallholders that are designated in the register as peasants is small. Nor is it possible that the group consisted of migrated villagers, for these would still be classified as villagers, independent of their actual residence. No matter whether such migrated villagers existed, they simply would not appear in an urban register. Economy of hypothesis makes it much more likely to interpret the large number of small holdings as the product of the centrifugal tendencies of partible inheritance. As will be discussed in Part Two Chapter Three, property fragmentation

occurred at such a rapid pace that many people must have ended up with tiny amounts of land.

At the other end of the spectrum, the top layer, consisting of owners of 100 arouras and over, comprised a tenth of all owners. The group was itself highly stratified. Some of its members were extremely wealthy. A small group held disproportionate amounts of land. For instance, Aurelia Charite, a lady who has also left us her archive, is listed in the register for a total of over 500 arouras.[77] What is more, prosopographical research has shown that some of these very wealthy owners were members of the same family. The wealthiest family owns in effect over a third of all land listed in the register.[78]

Although it is certainly possible to draw a sharp distinction between the group at the bottom and the group at the top of landholders, it should also be pointed out that the Hermopolite spectrum is in fact fairly continuous. In-between those with holdings below 10 arouras and those with over 100 arouras, a large group existed with holdings of intermediate size. This group consisted of 40% of all the holders, certainly not a negligible proportion. Half of them owned between 10 to 20 arouras, the other between 20 and 100 arouras.

Notwithstanding the existence of a group with medium-sized holdings, it will not come as a great surprise that the degree of inequality among the landowners was high. Expressed in gini-coefficients Hermopolite inequality was a high 0.815, on a scale in which 0 represents perfect equality, and 1 perfect inequality.[79] This is in fact the highest attested Roman gini-coefficient. The character of the inequality should be borne in mind, however. A high degree of inequality is easily equated with the existence of a group of very wealthy people. In the Hermopolite case, such wealthy persons certainly existed. However, the inequality is as much the product of the large group of smallholders. The main factor that explains the high degree of inequality is that the spectrum is so wide: the distance between upper and the lower part of the scale is large, with large clusters at both ends. As the group of smallholders did not form the bottom of the economic

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[77] Bowman (1985) 149-150 and *P.Charite* (1980) 10-12 for discussions.

[78] Bagnall (1993) 69 with Lewuillon-Blume (1988).

[79] Bowman (1985) 159. Gini-coefficients present a convenient way to express levels of inequality in a single figure. The Lorenz curves on which they are based describe what part of a given population of owners owns which part of the property. See Bagnall (1992a) for further explanation.

pyramid but consisted of people who simply had inherited tiny plots of land, the high gini-coefficient is of limited social significance.

There can be little doubt that the register forms an accurate description of urban patterns of landholding in mid-fourth-century Hermopolis. The patterns are established on the basis of a relatively large series of data. They are not, like for example the calculations of urban population size, the result of extrapolation of single numbers, where the margin of error increases with each new step. Moreover, a second, less complete register of Hermopolis dating from around the same period presents a similar picture, and so do some other Hermopolite registers of lesser quality.[80]

There can also be little doubt that in a general sense the picture is applicable to all the towns of Roman Egypt. The nomes for which we have evidence show similar patterns of landholding. Statistically their information is of little use, but illustrative examples do offer support. The numbers for holdings may differ, but urban smallholders, owners of substantial holdings and those with intermediate wealth are all frequently found. Village registers that also list the holdings of urban landowners show similar patterns at village level.[81]

However, when it comes to more precise application, the place of Hermopolis in the urban system gives reason to pause. Hermopolis was one of the largest towns of Roman Egypt. As most of our other information comes from the three large nomes of Middle Egypt, we do know much less about the property relations in the smaller towns. Further, the evidence comes from a relatively late period. It is certainly not far-fetched to suppose that property relations changed over time.

The Applicability of the Hermopolite Distribution Patterns

In trying to assess how representative the Hermopolite evidence is, three factors should be taken into account. In the first place, we are not in a timeless universe. Inequality may have risen over time. The Hermopolite register was compiled in the middle of the fourth cen-

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[80] *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) G.Herm (after 346/347); also *P.Lips.* 1 (1906) 101 (ca 300-325) and *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) Anh. 2 (late 3rd-begin 4th cent.).

[81] *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 9 (309) and *P.Yale* 3 (2001) 137 (216/217); both analysed in Bagnall (1992a).

tury, and may show the influence of late antique developments. Secondly, the type of land is of importance. The degree of inequality might have depended on the availability of private land. It is well known that the availability of such land increased during the Roman period. Thirdly, the type of settlement might have played a role. Rural and urban settlements had different distributions of landholdings, and on a similar principle smaller towns may have had a different distribution than a large town like Hermopolis.

The first factor is the possibility that the degree of inequality changed during the Roman period. Between the high empire and the late antiquity, so a common idea runs, the economic structure changed. Although the idea is embraced with less enthusiasm nowadays, it is still generally assumed that the degree of economic inequality increased. Large estates rose at the expense of smallholding peasants.

One would expect this development to show up in the distribution of landholdings. This has indeed been argued in the case of Roman Egypt.[82] In the registers of later date, the rise of the large estates has been detected. This would tally neatly with the existence of such estates in sixth-century Roman Egypt.[83]

The available registers do not lend themselves so easily to such an interpretation, however.[84] When we limit ourselves to urban holdings (whether in single villages or at nome level), the gini-coefficients can hardly be shown to present a neat increase over time. In the late second century, a Panopolite register of urban owners of garden land and vineyards in the Panopolite nome shows a gini-coefficient of 0.702.[85] Somewhat later, in 216, a small group 17 of urban owners at the village of Philadelphia produced a low gini of 0.438.[86] A century later, at the beginning of the fourth century, an equally small group of 18 urban owners at the village of Karanis produced a much higher gini of 0.638.[87] By the middle of the fourth century, the incomplete data for Antinoite holdings in the Hermopolite nome showed a gini of 0.616,

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[82] See the references in Bowman (1985) 137-138.

[83] For some bibliography see L.E. Tacoma, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 120 (1998) 123-130.

[84] This is the central argument of Bowman (1985).

[85] Bagnall (2002), who points out that the figure is not corrected for the high number of women, who owned relatively small holdings.

[86] Bagnall (1992a) 131 correcting Bowman (1985) 151.

[87] Bagnall (1992a) 133-134.

while we have seen that Hermopolis at the same period had a gini of 0.815.[88]

This relatively small set of rather disparate data simply cannot bear the weight of the argument. The variation in the figures might be explained by the fact that the registers contained different types of land, by the fact that the scope of the registers was different, and by the fact that in some cases (the village registers) the sample size is too small to produce reliable figures. Even by the middle of the fourth century, the period from which our evidence is best, a large number of small landholders can still be found. We know that in the sixth century large estates (called 'houses') were in existence, but we have little idea about their size or frequency. Nor is the extent of smallholding at that time known. The fact that the ginis differ might thus simply be coincidence, and proves little. The idea of rising inequality can therefore not be proved or disproved on the basis of the available registers.

This does not imply that the idea of rising inequality is incorrect, however.[89] Indeed, it has been so central to all interpretations of Roman history that it would be rash indeed to discard it for the reason that it cannot be demonstrated by the evidence from Egypt. The possibility should therefore certainly be allowed that in periods previous to the Hermopolite register, inequality was somewhat less marked.

Such rising inequality is often regarded as an exogenous process, the result of changing social relations, or the result of changes in the level of taxation. However, in the case of Egypt there might also be more concrete explanations.

This brings us to the second factor that has to be taken into account in judging the question how representative the Hermopolite register is: the type of land. The proportion of private land relative to other types of land increased over the course of the Roman period. The simple fact that more land became available to private individuals may have stimulated the degree of economic differentiation.

Public land was undoubtedly assigned in a more egalitarian fashion than private land was owned. Were we able to draw a distribution curve of tenancies of public land, this would show a much lower degree of inequality than a distribution of ownership of private land. However, such a comparison is not only inappropriate on the formal

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[88] Bowman (1985) table 5.

[89] Although Bowman (1985) is rightly cautious, this is nevertheless what he seems to imply.

ground that public land by definition was not owned, but also because much private land was leased out in small parcels as well. A distribution curve of tenancies of private land would presumably be similar to one of public land. This is of importance for the patterns of distribution. We should not compare public land distributions with the inequality in the ownership of private land,[90] but simply focus on how the stock of private land was increased.

The increase in private land seems to have been caused by two closely related processes.[91] In the first three centuries, the Romans turned public land into private land through the sale of unproductive public land at advantageous prices to private individuals. In the third and fourth centuries, public land became more and more a tax category, without the strict connotations of ownership it previously had possessed. By the fourth century, almost all public land was *de facto* privately owned. In the Hermopolite register, public land was a minor category, and was only designated as such because it paid a different tax rate, not because it was not in full ownership.[92]

However, both scale and pace of the general process of privatisation have been overestimated. Many scholars have assumed that under the early empire the majority of land in Egypt was still public.[93] They have further supposed a dramatic and large-scale process of conversion into private land. However, the fact that they have dated the changes at different moments is telling.[94] The few available figures leave ample scope for competing interpretations.

The Fayum villages had always had a high proportion of public land—the result of the land reclaiming activities of the Ptolemies in that area.[95] It seems likely that here, even in the fourth century, the amounts of public land remained high, despite substantial decreases.[96]

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[90] In that respect, the comments in Bagnall (1992a) 131 are somewhat misleading.

[91] For what follows see Rowlandson (1996) 27-101.

[92] Bowman (1985) 148-149.

[93] See the references in Rowlandson (1996) 63.

[94] Bowman (1986) 86-87 assumes that massive sales of public land occurred at the beginning of the fourth century, but does not cite evidence. Cf. Rowlandson (1996) 280, for a 'reasonable guess' that under the High Empire two-thirds of the land was private. If so, the difference with the fourth century cannot have been very large.

[95] In the second half of the 2nd cent. Philadelphia had 59% of public land, see Oates (1964/1965) 58 and Oates (1970) 385. Some villages around Karanis had 38% imperial land, 33% public, leaving only 29% in private hands, see Oates (1966) 452 n.2.

[96] At the beginning of the fourth century the proportions between public and private land were still roughly equal both in Karanis and in Theadelphia, see Bowman

In other nomes the situation appears to have been different. There seems to have been much less public land from the outset.[97] This places the low amounts of public land that we find in the fourth century into perspective.[98]

Change is likely, but hard to track down in the figures. Of course, even a decrease of a few percentage points will have involved enormous tracts of lands. However, as far as the evidence allows us to see, the scale of the process of change was not as large as has been supposed. It seems much more likely that those nomes with a high proportion of public land kept it, while those that showed a low proportion in the fourth century had already little public land in previous centuries.

This also matters for the interpretation of the fact that the distinction between public and private land gradually lost relevance. If we assume relatively little change in the proportions of public and private land, but much regional variation, the implication is that the consequences of the privatisation will have been felt there where the proportion of public land was the largest. As we have seen, this was the Fayum. However, it seems likely that the Fayum, for which we have most information, was rather unrepresentative. As most nomes probably had low proportions of public land to begin with, the changes in the distribution patterns of land cannot have been all that significant for Egypt as a whole.

The third factor to take into account in judging how representative the Hermopolite data are is the type of settlement. It is almost certain that there existed a structural distinction in landholding patterns between towns and villages.[99]

(1985) 148 n.58.

[97] 33% of land was public in the village of Naboo in the Apollonopolite Heptakomias nome at the beginning of the second century, see Bowman (1986) 77.

[98] Somewhere in the fourth century, the Oxyrhynchite nome as a whole had only 19% of public land, see R.S. Bagnall and K.A. Worp, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 37 (1980) 263-264 on *S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 12208 (ca 350). Bowman (1985) 147 n.57 points out that the figures in the text probably exclude (privately owned) vineyards and orchards; the actual amount of public land will therefore have been even lower. In the middle of the same century in the Hermopolite nome, the urban holdings of Hermopolites even consisted of 8% public land, those of Antinoites of only 5%, see Bowman (1985) 145-146. The villages of the same nome had a higher percentage of public land, roughly 28%, see Bowman (1985) 148 on *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) Anh. 2 (late 3rd-begin 4th cent.). In the Mendesian nome, a register records in one district of the nome that one third of the lands was public, see Rowlandson (1996) 66-67 with n.125 on *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3205 (297-308).

[99] This is the main argument of Bagnall (1992a).

Two village registers from the Fayum have been used to analyse the differences from urban patterns. One describes the situation in Philadelphia in 216, the other in Karanis, at the beginning of the fourth century. It would be possible to employ more data, especially from the second-century Fayum, but the point hardly needs demonstration. What both registers show is that the degree of inequality was lower than in Hermopolis.[100]

This raises the question whether differences would also exist between smaller and larger towns. Given the lower gini-coefficients in the villages, it is tempting to regard the property distribution of fourth-century Hermopolis as one extreme on a spectrum of possibilities. However, we should not forget that there existed another urban centre: Alexandria. As was mentioned, wealthy Alexandrians held their lands all over Egypt. The distribution curve of the holdings of Alexandrian landowners is completely unknown, and we can only make guesses about its possible shape. Nevertheless, it is likely to have been different from the Hermopolite one. What is certain is that there were some extremely wealthy owners, whose wealth must have dwarfed the wealth of the members of the local elites.

A substantial group will have owned holdings of over 1,000 arouras, in case of the more substantial estates spread out over several nomes.[101] Here no doubt fortunes could be found that approached those of the imperial aristocracy.[102] Although there is no evidence for this, it is also likely, on analogy with the case of Hermopolis, that there also existed a group of smallholders. If so, that would imply that the range of holdings is larger than in Hermopolis. This in turn sug-

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[100] Philadelphia had a gini-coefficient of 0.518; Karanis one of 0.431, but cf. my remarks on the problems using gini-coefficients. The general difference between village and town is not in doubt, however. For Philadelphia see *P.Yale* 3 (2001) 137 (216/217) with Bowman (1985) 151 with table 5 and Bagnall (1992a) 130-1 and (2002). For Karanis see *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 9 (309) with Bagnall (1992a) 132-136 and tables 1-2. Some minor corrections to these tables: zeros instead of blanks should be supplied for the following persons: NN s. Maron; NN s. Demetrios; Palladia-Liberalia; Abok s. Melas; Pemes s. Hermias. By mistake, the numbers in the first entry of table 1 for the private and public land of Abok, gymnasiarch, are taken over from table 2 (which contains the adjusted data). The correct numbers should read: -46.81 private, 46.81 public and 0.00 total. These corrections do not affect Bagnall's analysis.

[101] The prime example is the estate described by Rathbone (1991). Another example is described in el Abbadi (1975).

[102] Bagnall (1992a) 143 was struck by the absence of senatorial fortunes in the Hermopolite registers. But such wealth should be sought among the members of the Alexandrian elite, not among members of the local elites.

gests that the likely distribution pattern would be even more unequal than the Hermopolite one.

It remains important to bear in mind the remarks about the proportions of owners. In Alexandria, a higher degree of inequality probably occurred simultaneously with a lower proportion of owners. Relatively few persons owned land, and between them, the distribution was more unequal. By contrast, in villages, relatively more persons of the village population were landholders, and among them, the distribution of properties was more equal. Were we to include all non-owners, the differences between villages, Hermopolis and Alexandria would be even more marked.

If we accept the possibility that Alexandrian patterns were even more skewed than the Hermopolite ones, a three-fold division occurs, with Alexandria as most unequal, and the villages as more equal, and Hermopolis still highly unequal but in-between the other two. This again raises the question whether size of towns was a factor. Would towns themselves have differed?

The question cannot be answered with the help of evidence. Urban holdings in villages never produce reliable series, and even if they did, the situation is likely to have varied from village to village. The situation of Antinoopolis, for which we do have a register of the holdings in the Hermopolite nome, is far too complex to be made productive. The same applies, for different reasons, to a register of vineyards in Panopolis. Although papyrological miracles should never be excluded, the likelihood that a land register from a small town is published is small, given the distribution pattern of the finds.

Only general considerations can help. Smaller towns had smaller nomes. Not only in absolute terms, but also proportionally: a small town might have been five times as small as a large town, but had a nome ten times as small. As less land was available in smaller towns, there can be no doubt that average holdings were smaller. It also seems plausible that smaller towns had somewhat larger proportions of owners than larger ones. This would then also suggest that the distribution of holdings was also somewhat more equal, approaching village patterns.

As was stated, there can be little doubt that in a general sense the Hermopolite register is representative of the urban patters of distribution of holdings. When it comes to more specific applications, it certainly cannot be excluded that in periods previous to the middle of the fourth century the degree of inequality was less marked. However, the

fact that it is impossible to prove with the evidence that such changes actually occurred should make us cautious. Lack of substantiation might be blamed in part on the disparate nature of the evidence, but it also suggests that radical differences are unlikely. Further differences with the smaller towns may have existed. Not only must average holdings have been smaller, it also is possible that smaller towns had a less uneven distribution.

Female Landowners

The last factor to take into account for the creation of a model of landowning is the gender of the landowners. It is clear that men dominated among the landowners, but there were also female landowners. Kalpournia Herakleia, for example, was a daughter of a member of the Alexandrian Museion and the granddaughter of a benefactor, and owned so much land in a cluster of five villages in the Oxyrhynchite nome that she must have practically owned the villages.[103] In a division of one extremely large estate in the Hermopolite nome one of the recipients was a woman. She received in all more than 200 arouras of land, which placed her in the higher reaches of society.[104]

The fact that women could inherit and own real property even after marriage has received much attention.[105] Such full ownership, with equal rights as men, was not self-evident in ancient societies, and where it might have occurred, it is not always well attested. The fact that women had access to real property is an indication of their high standing within their family and in the outside world.

However, the situation in Roman Egypt is complex. As will be discussed in the next chapter, female access to land went hand in hand with an almost complete exclusion from public functions. Women did not hold magistracies and could not become members of the local council. Economic standing was not reflected in civic life.

To be able to discuss these problems, it is important to know more about female patterns of landholding. These have been hardly discussed so far in the scholarly literature. We need to know what pro-

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[103] *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3047 (245), for the family see Bowman (2001).
[104] *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (268) with el Abbadi (1975).
[105] Rowlandson ed. (1998) for texts and further references.

portion of landowners was female, what proportion of the land was held by them, and how the holdings where distributed over the economic spectrum. Again, our main source of information is formed by the land register from Hermopolis. However, in this case it is rather difficult to determine how representative the Hermopolite register is.

In the middle of the fourth century, female landowners constituted 14.7% of all Hermopolite owners and 9.5% of all Antinoite owners of land in the Hermopolite nome.[106] Similar percentages are found in two villages. In Philadelphia in 216, 31 women appear among the owners, yielding a percentage of 16%.[107] In Karanis at the beginning of the fourth century the percentage of female owners was 12.7%.[108] The proportion of female landowners might therefore be set in the range of 10 to 20%.

However, what exactly constitutes the norm is open to question.[109] Different percentages are also found. In Tanis, a village near Philadelphia and at the same period as the register of that place, 41.9% of the owners of private land were women.[110] Among vineyard owners of the town of Panopolis in the early second century, the proportion of female ownership has been estimated at 36.8%, again significantly higher than the proportions found in the Hermopolite registers.[111] In

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[106] *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) (after 346/347) in my own analysis. F.Herm. has 35 entries with women as principal owners on a total of 238 entries, while F.Ant. has 20 such entries on a total of 210.

[107] *P.Yale* 3 (2001) p.19-20.

[108] *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 9 (309) has 14 women on 110 village landowners; another 3 occur together with men. Note that Bagnall (1992a) in his analysis of the text assigns in his tables other genders to Heros, Atia, Amis (*B.L.* 8) and Markella (not Markellas, cf. app. crit.). Alema is male according to the edition but female according to Bagnall. The name does not occur in Preisigke's *Namenbuch* or Foraboschi's *Onomasticon*; I have left Alema male. The urban part of the list, of little statistical value, contains 4 women (plus 2 as joint owners) on 18 men.

[109] Cf. Rowlandson ed. (1998) 220, who mentions without further references a relatively high percentage: "It appears from land registers and other evidence throughout the Roman period that about one-third of landowners were women". This statement might be based on Hobson (1983), but Hobson refers to houses, not land.

[110] *P.Prag.* 2 (1995) 137 (222) in my own analysis. This tax list of the monartabic tax and a much smaller transportation tax has in 62 entries 26 women, 30 men, and 6 persons of unknown gender (including some unspecified heirs). The list is incomplete, but unlikely to be unrepresentative.

[111] *P.Achmim* (1930) 9 (late 2nd cent.) in the analysis of Bagnall (2002). By coincidence, the best preserved part contains names starting with sigma. Female Egyptian names often start with Sen-; hence the proportion for sigma (92%) cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the register, though it is likely that the overrepresentation of letter sigma to the others is itself testimony to the high proportion of women. What is preserved of the rest has a proportion of 27% women.

the village of Theadelphia in 166/167 the proportion of women among owners of vineyards was even 61.5%.[112]

The female holdings are generally smaller than those of men.[113] In Hermopolis, the 14.7% of women owned 9.8% of all urban land.[114] Their average holding was 38.6 arouras, well below the general average of 63.4 arouras.[115] The female holdings in the Panopolite register of vineyards were also smaller than those of men.[116] There are two exceptions, however. In Karanis in the early fourth century the average holding is similar to that of men—in fact, it is slightly larger.[117] In Philadelphia, in 216, female landowners formed 16% of all landowners but owned 23-24% of all land.[118]

The distribution of these holdings is likely to have followed those of men. However, in all cases the numbers involved are so small that it is impossible to achieve certainty. What is certain is that female holdings occurred both at the top and the end of the spectrum. So, in the Hermopolite distribution patterns of Table 1.3.1, the distribution of female holdings shows very wealthy women, while others are found at the bottom of the spectrum. Even here, with a relatively large data set, the figures are small. It is probable that normally there were also women with holdings in the intermediate category, and that the spectrum of their holdings followed that of men.[119]

The general patterns are then clear, but what about the differences? Especially the percentages of female owners seem to fluctuate wildly. It is difficult to interpret the patterns, let alone offer an explanation for the fluctuations, and the question would have to be subjected to closer scrutiny than can be offered here. As the numbers involved are small, random scatter will inevitably have been large, but it is not cer-

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112 *B.G.U.* 9 (1937) 1896 (166/167) in my own analysis has 56 women on 91 owners.

113 Bagnall (1993) 130, followed by Rowlandson ed. (1998) 220 estimated that female holdings comprised "between one-sixth and one-quarter" of all land. That seems an overestimate, for it implies with the given percentages of female owners that in most cases the average size of female holdings was larger, not smaller, than those of men.

114 Bagnall (1993) 93 gives 8.5%, perhaps with Antinoite holdings included in the calculation.

115 Bowman (1985) table 2 for the latter figure (which includes the female holdings).

116 Bagnall (2002) 12.

117 Bagnall (1993) 130: the male average is 32.3 arouras, the female 36.3 arouras.

118 *P.Yale* 3 (2001) p.19-20.

119 In the Antinoite part of the register, this is actually the case.

tain that this can account for all variation. It might seem an attractive solution to attribute the differences simply to local and chronological variation. After all the data come from different places and times. However, such an explanation is too easy, for there can be little doubt that patterns of landholding are to a large extent the product of patterns of inheritance, and it is hard to accept that practices of inheritance fluctuated so wildly in time and place.

By way of working hypothesis, three patterns may be distinguished. Firstly, in towns the number of female landowners seems to have been smaller than in villages. Secondly, among female owners, specific types of lands (vineyards) were more current than other, more regular types of lands (grain lands). Thirdly, female ownership decreased over the centuries. These patterns go a long way to accommodate the disparate data. However, distinguishing patterns is something different from explaining them. None of the three patterns is in fact firmly established, and all are difficult to explain. We should be cautious.

With respect to the observation that the number of female landowners was higher in villages than in towns, one may wonder whether it is settlement type itself that is the main explanation. If gender differences in ownership are mainly the product of patterns of inheritance, there is no real reason why these would differ between urban and rural settlements. Differences would rather be caused by cultural influence. If it could be assumed that large differences existed between Egyptian, Greek and Roman patterns of inheritance—something that would still need to be demonstrated!—the variation in Greco-Roman influence would perhaps provide a better understanding than urbanisation per se.

The second pattern, the preference for specific types of land, explains perfectly the extremely high proportions of female owners in two registers of vineyards. However, the problem is that the rationale is difficult to see. Although it has been observed that in inheritances there existed a tendency to award specific types of property preferentially to daughters, it is difficult to see what advantage vineyards could have for women. Perhaps there existed a relation with the payment of rents in money as opposed to payments in kind?

The third pattern, the observation that the number of female landowners decreased in time, fits well with the chronology of the data: higher percentages are generally found in the second century, lower in the fourth century. However, one would expect the reverse develop-

ment: an increase, not a decrease, in the extent of female ownership. The best examples of very wealthy women all date from the third and fourth centuries, not from the previous centuries. If anything, one would therefore expect that as time progressed the extent of female landowning would grow, not diminish.

It is thus difficult to achieve certainty about patterns of female landholding. For want of a better solution, it seems safest to stick with the data of the Hermopolite register, not because it is representative, but because it is the most reliable guide to urban patterns of landholding that we have. As the patterns of the other data are so difficult to establish, it is impossible to state with any degree of probability how possible differences in smaller towns should be envisaged. With all due caution, we might thus assume that in the towns about 15% of landowners were women, that their holdings were smaller than those of men, and that their holdings covered the whole spectrum of ownership.

Conclusion

After this long survey a summary might be helpful. The aim of this chapter was to analyse elite wealth. Such an analysis is of crucial importance for the understanding of elite formation, for there is a direct relation between economic differentiation and social status. The best way to analyse economic differentiation among the elite is through patterns of landholding.

Wills such as those of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon already indicate that the major constituents of inheritances are land, houses and slaves, with landholdings being dominant. Nevertheless attention had to be given to the extent of other, non-agricultural, forms of wealth. This is of real importance, because if part of elite wealth is derived from non-agricultural sources, the possibility arises that an analysis of elite wealth through landholdings is misleading.

There is some evidence for non-agricultural wealth and business activity. However, all is rather small-scale, and never constitutes the sole activity of members of the elite. We do not find businessmen among the elite, and agriculture remained clearly the core of economic activity. What is more, most business turns out to be related to agriculture.

For business activities that remained completely separate from agriculture the trade with India forms the test case. Although it appears likely that high-ranking members of the Alexandrian elite or even the imperial aristocracy were financing the ventures, there is hardly any evidence for involvement of local elites. This does not mean that the possibility that they participated should be completely excluded, but that even on the most favourable interpretation caution is needed.

We end with a paradox: on the one hand there was more to wealth than land alone, but because most business ventures remained estate related, land still forms a good indicator of economic differentiation among the elite.

Lists of owners and holdings provided the serial data that are needed for the analysis. The size of the holdings should not be confused with income, or with their value, but forms a reliable indication of economic differentiation among the elite. There are three factors to take into account: the proportion of owners on the total population, the distribution of holdings among the owners, and the gender of the owners.

In general the evidence is good: a number of registers survives. A register from mid-fourth-century Hermopolis provides the best evidence for the urban patterns. The main problem is to determine how representative it is, and in cases where it is not, to determine in which direction deviations should be expected. There could have been differences between the large town Hermopolis and the many smaller towns. And there could be chronological developments: the data from Hermopolis stem from a relatively late period, the middle of the fourth century. Such differences might have existed, but nowhere do they appear to be dramatic.

Relatively few persons in the towns owned land. The proportion of owners in towns will have hovered around 2%. A comparison with Alexandria and some villages shows a negative correlation between settlement size and proportion of owners. This makes it likely that a similar principle applied to smaller and larger towns. However, the percentages are all very low, even in villages; thus, the room for variation was limited.

The distribution of ownership showed a high degree of inequality: the spectrum is wide, fairly continuous, and has large clusters at both ends. Half of the owners owned land below subsistence means. They did not form the urban poor, but had obtained their land through inheritance. Above this group, but below the level of the elite, there ex-

isted a relatively large group of landowners with holdings of moderate size.

A comparison with putative distribution patterns at Alexandria and some villages demonstrates that the degree of inequality is likely to have correlated with settlement size. In smaller towns, there is therefore a possibility—which cannot be proven—that the landholdings were slightly more equally distributed. Further, there is a serious possibility that the degree of inequality increased over time. This is impossible to demonstrate with the help of the available data, but that might say more about the disparate nature of our evidence than anything else. The possibility that such a rise in inequality was caused by an increase in the available amount of private land should not be exaggerated, however. The room for manoeuvre was again limited; the possibility that the situation was dramatically different from that in fourth-century Hermopolis is not large.

The most problematic part of the analysis is formed by the gender of the owners. In Hermopolis, approximately 15% of owners were women. In many other cases, women also constitute a similar minority, but the problem is that in other cases the percentages fluctuate wildly. In the Hermopolite register the presence of women is relatively low, and so it is in some villages, but there are also cases where the percentages are substantially higher. However, patterns are hard to determine, and almost impossible to explain. What we can say is that women normally constituted a significant minority among the landowners, that their holdings were generally smaller than those of men, and that it is likely that they were distributed over the whole spectrum.

PART ONE CHAPTER FOUR

ELITE FORMATION

Elite Status

In the previous two chapters urban population size and economic hierarchies have been studied. It remains to discuss elite formation. Which part of the urban population should be considered to have formed the elite? What was its composition?

In theory these questions are straightforward and their answers are unproblematic. Just as in other parts of the Roman world, the elite consisted of the wealthiest landowners who resided in the towns. The fact that they formed an elite was expressed in their membership of the council.

Elite formation of third-century Egypt has not received the attention it deserves, however. On closer view, it appears too simple to equate the wealthiest landowners with the councillors. While the extent of overlap between these groups was certainly large, they did not coincide completely. In the first place, certain groups of wealthy landowners—minors, women—were not eligible for council membership. From a historical point of view, this is hardly surprising, but one has to realise that they formed substantial groups. Further, depending on how we envisage the structure and the size of the councils, some councillors may have fallen below the top of the pyramid of landowners. The social elite and the economic elite did not coincide completely.

A further complication lies in the existence of a regional elite. While most members of the elite confined their activities to the town they lived in, many of the more prominent local dignitaries were members of a province-wide elite covering Egypt as a whole. This is best visible in the existence of double councillorship: some councillors were not only councillor of their home-town, but also of Alexandria. There are also many other hints that the more important members of the local elites found career opportunities elsewhere. What is

striking is not so much that a regional elite existed, but the extent to which the regional elite was integrated with the elites of the *metropoleis*.

These phenomena merit further investigation. To a greater extent than in the previous chapters the focus will be specifically on the third-century. In the first place there is abundant third-century evidence for elite formation, so there is hardly a need to take a broader perspective. The fact that the evidence is so rich is the result of the creation of the councils at the beginning of the third century. A system of magistrates had already long been in existence. From the beginning of the third century councils were added to the civic institutions, and thereby provided the *metropoleis* with all the paraphernalia of Graeco-Roman urban life. The introduction of the councils not only shifted the balance of local power in favour of the elites, but the elites were now institutionalised as a formally demarcated social group. For us that has the advantage that members of the elites are more clearly visible in the sources.

The inquiry, it should be explicitly stated, is directed at the institutionalised elite, at those people (invariably men) that had a share in local government through membership of the local council. The reason to focus on the institutionally created elite is simple. Elite status was undoubtedly also acquired on a personal basis, and may have differed from individual to individual. However, in this period membership of a formally demarcated status group like the council was the primary road through which status was sought and through which it was obtained. At any rate, in this period there were no other institutionalised sources of elite status to speak of.

Although the honour councillorship conveyed must have gradually diminished over time, it continued to be valued throughout the third century and beyond. Councillorship kept being mentioned in honorific titles, in all kinds of contexts. It was and remained an important part of elite self-representation. It is true that in the towns of the third century more social institutions existed than the council alone that could confer high standing on its members. The gymnasial class, the closed group of Hellenised inhabitants of the town, was still in existence.[1] The functioning of a *gerousia*, a council of elders, is documented pre-

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[1] See the documents discussed by Nelson (1979). A good overview of the status of the gymnasial class is still lacking.

cisely in the third century.[2] The place of such groups in the social spectrum would merit more attention than it has received thus far. What is certain, however, is that although they did have an elitist ring, they formed no match for the council. They had no share in local power, and they did not have a membership as constrained and exclusive as the council.

Another factor is that the priesthood did not form a force to be reckoned with. In this period neither the old religion nor the new religion offered a good alternative to express elite status for members of the elite. In the third century Egyptian temples were much less powerful than before, and especially in the towns they hardly made their presence felt.[3] There is hardly any involvement of members of the urban elite with the traditional priesthood or the temples.[4] There is a marked contrast with later periods, when pagan religion began to become equated with Hellenic culture, and members of the elite had no difficulty in associating themselves with Egyptian temples.[5] In the third century, the official religious activity of members of the elite normally remained confined to the imperial cult, of which they served as priests. Such priesthoods were magistracies, and had little to do with the traditional Egyptian priesthood which was inheritable.[6]

The inroads that Christianity had made into the elites of Roman Egypt by this time are unclear. Leaving aside the story of the hermit Antony, who according to his biographer gave away an amount of land that without doubt would have made him immediately eligible for council membership,[7] there are hardly any signs of the adoption of

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[2] Van Rossum (1988).

[3] Bagnall (1993) 261-268; Frankfurter (1998). There seems to me less disagreement on this point between the two authors than Frankfurter seems to wish.

[4] Cf. *P.Tebt.* 2 (1907) 313 (210-211).

[5] See for a Panopolite example the documents of *P.Ammon* 1 (1997).

[6] The office of ἱερεύς (‘priest’), which is found on a few occasions in civic titulature (e.g. *P.Mert.* 1 (1948) 26 (274), *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 56 (203), *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2584 (211) and perh. *B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1070 (218)) just as the normally used ἀρχιερεύς (‘high priest’) refers to a priesthood of the imperial cult.

[7] Athanasios, *Life of Anthony* 1-2, giving away “300 fertile and very beautiful arouras” inherited from his wealthy parents who were also Christians. The details are either exceptional or, more likely, an anachronistic exaggeration meant to heighten the drama of the conversion. Note that later, in Athanasios’ own life-time, such wealth would become more common for Christian leaders. One Hermopolite bishop (incidentally also occurring in Athanasios’ own *Paschal Letters*) owned over 450 arouras, see *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F (after 346/347) lines 147-149 with W. van Gucht in: *Atti del XVII congresso internazionale di papirologia* 3 (1984) 1135-1140.

Christianity by members of the third-century elite.[8] It is somewhat ironic that the first securely attested contact between the third-century elites and Christianity consists of an order by the president of a council to arrest a Christian.[9] What is more important is the simple fact that in this period Christianity did not yet form an alternative route to express elite status. Advertising the new creed would still have been a risky venture, and would hardly have increased one's status among non-believers.

This chapter, then, focuses on what might be termed the traditional mechanisms of elite formation. There is no reason to seek elite status elsewhere, and there is enough in the traditional institutions that merits closer investigation. Firstly the composition of the councils will be studied, then their size. Lastly, the regional elites will be considered, and the extent to which they were integrated in the civic life of the *metropoleis*.

The Composition of the Councils

When Septimius Severus visited Egypt from late 199 to the end of 200, he granted the Alexandrians what they had wanted for a long time, the *ius buleutarum*.[10] Shortly after he left Egypt, councils (*bou-*

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[8] These signs include the private letter *P.Bas.* (1917) 16 (1st half 3rd cent), originating from Christian circles and mentioning the appointment of someone into the council. See also *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.) for two possibly Christian women in elite circles; the brother of one of them was a former president of the council. Further, it is certainly possible that members of the urban elite owned some of the Christian manuscripts dating from this period. In this respect it might perhaps be relevant that an elite will, *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276), was written on the back of a text of Sextus Julius Africanus, an author primarily known as the first Christian writer of a chronicle of world history. For comments on other manuscripts the family may have owned see Bagnall (1992b) (with n.16 on the possible Christianity of the family), an interesting piece of papyrological detective-work. It goes without saying that the Christianisation of the elite is a topic that deserves more study than can be offered here.

[9] *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3035 (256) lines 1-5: "From the president. To the komarchs and keepers of the peace of the village of Mermertha. Send at once Petosarapis s. of Horos, Christian, or else come up yourselves", following the editors' interpretation of χρησιανόν as 'Christian'. They also point out that it is uncertain whether Petosarapis is to be arrested *because* he is a Christian. Cf. also the later *P.Oxy.* 33 (1968) 2665 (305/306), probably connected to the persecution of Diocletian.

[10] S.H.A., *Severus* 17.2 for the expression; see also Dio 51.17.3. For the chronology of the emperor's visit, see Halfmann (1986) 216-223.

lai) also begin to be attested in the nome capitals.[11] Undoubtedly the emperor had extended the right to have a council from Alexandria to the *metropoleis*. At a single stroke, all the towns of Roman Egypt acquired a council.

The councils were composed of an oligarchy of wealthy landowners, who through various forms of elite competition helped to finance urban life. The councils were responsible for the collection of taxes in their nomes, including the irregular levies of the *annona militaris*. They also had the supervision of local finances and were responsible for the nomination of liturgists and magistrates.[12] Part of their power was shared with the *strategos*, the state appointed nome supervisor.

The aim of this section is to study the precise composition of the council. Which members of urban society were admitted? In theory, there are two ways to study the composition of the councils. One is through the study of the social and economic background of the individuals who made it into the council. The other is through the study of formal criteria for entrance. Despite the fact that hundreds of names of councillors survive, very little can be established about their social and economic background, so it is the latter approach that is followed here. What was the procedure for admittance, what were the formal qualifications, which criteria remained implicit?

Because of their creation at a single moment, there can be little doubt that the councils of the *metropoleis* had a uniform outlook. They may not have been of the same size, but entrance procedures and qualifications for members are likely to have been the same in all towns. At any rate, there is little reason to assume that structural differences existed, nor do the sources offer any hints in that direction.

Although there is no conclusive proof, everything suggests that once admitted into the council, members held their seat for life, just as in other parts of the Roman Empire.[13] Councillorship was thereby

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[11] For the chronology of the reforms see Bowman (1971) 18-19 and N. Lewis, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 19 (1982) 78-79. After the emperor had left, the council of Alexandria came in operation somewhere between Pachon (≈ May) 200 and Pauni (≈ June) 201. At Oxyrhynchos an ill-known predecessor (if that is what it was) of the council, the κοινὸν τῶν ἀρχόντων (the 'group of magistrates'), is mentioned as late as Pharmouthi (≈ April) 201. The first surviving report of a council meeting, *P.Oxy.* 47 (1980) 3340 (201/202?), might follow very closely in date (see the discussion in the introduction and line 5n. of the edition). If the councils of Alexandria and the *metropoleis* began to function at the same time, this must therefore have occurred between April and June 201.

[12] See Bowman (1971) 69-119 for the business of the council.

[13] The question presents itself because some councillors are designated as *ge*-

conceptually differentiated from liturgies, magistracies and administrative positions like that of *strategos*, which were always held for a limited period. Whether there were many councillors who reached particularly old ages is a different question.

In theory, members of the council could lose their seat through misconduct. "If a councillor strikes or censures the president or a councillor in the council he looses his councillorship and is set in a position of dishonour", the emperor Caracalla ordained.[14] However, although some reports of council meetings certainly show forms of behaviour that could be qualified as misbehaviour, and although there are many cases where councillors did not fulfil their financial obligations, there are no cases known where councillors were actually deprived of their seat. It is, however, an open question how we would know about such cases, for we can hardly expect people to advertise social failure.[15]

Once admitted, the person added the title councillor (*bouleutes*) to his name, often followed by the official name of his town. The title could be carried during the rest of his life. In written texts, it is clear that titles were written with great care. Nevertheless, whether the title was actually used depended on context.[16] Both practical considera-

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nomenos bouleutes, 'former councillor', for which see below. The oldest attested councillor is 61: *P.Lond.* 2 (1898) 348, col. 1 (203). Somewhat illogically, Bowman (1971) 25 n.11 remarks that this shows there is no maximum age for councillorship. A higher maximum age for membership could after all still be possible, as was the case with liturgists, cf. Lewis (1997^2) 92.

[14] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1406 (213-217) lines 6-10. For the βουλευτικὴ ἀξία, 'councillor status', see also *S.B.* 3 (1926-1927) 7261 (3rd-early 4th cent.) and *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3613 (279).

[15] It is likely that *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1406 (213-217), just cited, was occasioned by some incident. In *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3613 (279) loss of councillorship is mentioned as a theoretical possibility. For some evidence from the Western part of the Roman empire, see Crook (1967) 66-67. For some speculation about a case of collective loss of councillorship (though hardly convincing), see the commentary to *P.Alex.Giss.* (1969) 5 (215). How little we know about such procedures is demonstrated by the council debate of *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.). There, a case is discussed of two councillors, Aktiasion and Theon, who had fled (ἀποδράντος) from liturgies (the councillorship of the former is uncertain). The debate centers on the question of finding suitable replacements for the liturgists, not on the question whether they should lose their seat. Does this mean that loss of councillorship was self-evident, or was councillorship not connected in this way to fulfilment of liturgies? The fact that both persons do not occur in other papyri as councillors may mean anything and nothing.

[16] The case of Ptoleminos-Sarmates demonstrates the point. In three texts of roughly the same period, he is three times called differently, and only once councillor: *exegetes* in *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 891 (294), *exegetes*, councillor, conveyor of chaff in *P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4597 (294) and *epimeletes* of chaff in *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 43 R° (295).

tions and self-representation seem to play a role. In reports of council meetings councillorship was so evident that the title was not used: it did not help to distinguish between different speakers.[17] Sometimes no title was used at all. In other cases the title of councillor was dropped in favour of more important ones. However, it is certainly not possible to explain each individual case of title-omission, and there are some strange cases indeed.[18] Although muster-copies are known to have existed for titulature of specific persons,[19] it would, in fact, be odd to expect complete consistency: many of the documents in which the names are found were written by private individuals who can only have been dimly aware of notarial niceties.

Omission of the title of councillor did occur. However, no cases are known where the title of councillor was omitted because of a termination of the councillorship. The 'former' councillors that are sometimes encountered in the sources are, as far as can be established, always deceased.[20]

Despite the abundant documentation about the councils of especially Middle Egypt, next to nothing is known about the admission procedure itself. We possess a fair number of reports of council meet-

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[17] See e.g. *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300), where speakers are designated by name and office: "Aur. Antonios-Phileas, *exegetes* of Alexandria and (former?) gymnasiarch said: ..." etc.

[18] See e.g. the case of one Ammonios. In *B.G.U.* 11 (1966) 2118 (223) he is *exegetes*, *pompagogas* and councillor, whereas two years later he is in *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 909 (225) former-*exegetes*. It is certain that this is the same person, for the same son Serenos is mentioned in both texts. Or the case of Aur. Ptollion, who was kosmetes and councillor in *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229), but who was at a later stage (*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261)—not completely certain but very likely) referred to as *kosmetes* only. Or Aur. Thonios-Theagenes, *exegetes*, councillor, *epimeletes* of a fort in *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1252 R° 2 (after 294/295), but probably solely *exegetes* in *P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3246 (298). Simple mistakes also cannot be ruled out. See e.g. *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247) containing two drafts of the same text on the same sheet of papyrus; only one mentions the office of *dekaprotos* of Aur. Asklepiades, gymnasiarch, councillor, president, *dekaprotos* of the Middle Toparchy.

[19] Rathbone (1991) 47-48 for an example.

[20] So already Preisigke (1903) 50 with n.8; updated with further bibliography and references by Worp (1978). It should further be noted that there are two cases where aorist and perfect participles of βουλεύω are employed. Both describe living councillors: *S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9192 (314-315) (βουλευσάντων) and *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3613 (279) (βεβουλευκότων). In neither case is it particularly clear what is meant, but both cases seem irrelevant to the issue. For the former, see Wegener in the ed. pr. and Bowman (1971) 26 n.14 (neither particularly convincing). Further, as Worp (1997) 201 n.3 pointed out, the aorist ἐπολιτεύσαντο of *P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2106 (306, see *B.L.* 11), certainly does not mean 'those who have been councillors'; it is likely to refer to persons who had held an office.

ings, we have many of the documents emanating from the council, and we know the names and the careers of hundreds of councillors. As the same time we do not have documents explicitly telling us how people became council member; indeed we hardly possess any hints.[21] This stands in clear contrast to the procedures of nomination for magistracies and liturgies. These are well documented and can be studied in painstaking detail. In the case of membership of the council, the lack of documentation may simply be caused by the haphazard patterns of survival, but it is also possible that little documentation was required. Given the silence in the surviving reports of council meetings, it seems likely that admission of new members did not require formal debate. There must have been some other procedure to admit new candidates, probably involving a form of cooptation.[22] Election can at any rate be ruled out. Popular voting played no role.

Councillorship was not directly inheritable.[23] There were of course local dynasties of councillors, and we may suppose that whenever councillors had sons, councillorship would be sought for them (or imposed on them). The pressure of social expectations must have been high. Hence in practice sons of councillors might have often followed in their father's footsteps, but the process was not self-evident, let alone legally binding.[24] Heirs naturally had to take over any remaining financial burdens. These could include the financial burdens of the councillorship, but never concerned the deceased's seat in the council.[25]

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[21] As an exception, one such hint is offered by the fragmentary letter *P.Bas.* (1917) 16 (1st half 3rd cent) where in line 9 it is stated "for he was appointed(?) in the council", ạὐ̣τ̣[ος] γὰρ ὀνομασθῇ εἰς τὴν βουλήν. If ὀνομάζω is used in a technical sense, it might suggest a procedure similar to that of liturgies and magistracies, where nomination became tantamount to appointment, see Lewis (1997²) 61 and passim. However, as it is here used in a private letter, the phrase might also have been used in a non-technical sense. In the absence of more references in clearer contexts it seems safer not to build too much on it. See in a similar vein Bowman (1971) 23.

[22] So already Jouguet (1919) 71. Cf. for the Western part of the Empire Garnsey (1974).

[23] Bowman (1971) 30.

[24] *Patrobouloi*, sons designated to follow in their father's footsteps, are mentioned later, in *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13146 (prob. early 4th cent., see K.A. Worp, *Z.P.E* 74 (1988) 252.).

[25] In *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233) otherwise unspecified heirs of a deceased councillor are paying back the interest of his entrance fee. There is no hint that they took over his seat in the council; if they would they probably had to pay themselves a new entrance fee anyway.

It is possible that some relation existed between selection procedures and the organisation of the population of the *metropoleis* into tribes.[26] A relation between council and tribes existed in the three Greek *poleis* that possessed a council before 200. In Ptolemaic Naukratis, each tribe contributed ten members to the council.[27] In Antinoopolis there was a system of rotation at least for the presidents: each tribe provided a president in turn.[28] As Antinoopolis is known to have had its constitution modelled on that of Naukratis, it is not far-fetched to suppose that the council members of Antinoopolis were also recruited from the tribes in a system of equal representation.[29] At least the system of rotating presidents was kept in use after the Severan introduction of the councils in the *metropoleis*. Ptolemais, which probably had a different constitution, in the Roman period nevertheless had a system of rotating presidents.[30]

The question to what extent the *metropoleis* followed these examples of tribal representation is difficult to answer. In Oxyrhynchos it is known that the tribes were created shortly after the introduction of the council, though not at the same time.[31] In contrast to the *poleis*, the tribes had no functions beyond the distribution of the liturgies over the population. Through a schedule of annual rotation each tribe held liturgies in turn. In as much as they became equated with liturgies, such schedules may also have covered the distribution of some magistracies. In a few sessions of the council, members of tribes do make their appearance.[32] Nevertheless, it is clear that there were no schedules of rotation for the presidency of the council. There is not a hint in the debates that presidents were chosen on a tribal basis. The cases of iteration of the presidency do not follow any recognisable tribal cycle. Further, in all the evidence relating to the council the tribes are

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[26] This is assumed by Bowman (1971) 14, 22-23; see also Wegener (1938). See Delia (1991) 120 for Alexandria. Cf. Jongman (1988) 290-302 for Western parallels.

[27] *S.E.G.* 47 (1997) 2123 (3rd cent. B.C.).

[28] *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 199 (203).

[29] Though the addition of 25 new members to the council mentioned in *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13776 (241/242 A.D) (discussed below) must have created difficulties, because there were 10 tribes.

[30] Bowman (1971) 14.

[31] Wegener (1938) 513-514, showing a starting date of 207/8. I assume for the sake of argument that all *metropoleis* obtained such tribes—something that still needs to be established.

[32] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272), *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.) (though partly based on restoration). Cf. *P.Oxy.* 24 (1957) 2407 (late 3rd cent.).

only very seldom mentioned. If a system of tribal representation existed, it hardly made its impact felt.

Independent of whether tribes helped in selecting councillors or not, how were choices of candidates made?

One possibility is that candidates gained access to the council through the holding of a magistracy. Career patterns were far from fixed in Egypt, but we may imagine a scenario in which the holding of one of the lower magistracies gave access to the council. Given the pressure to find suitable candidates for the magistracies, this might have been an attractive solution. In the western part of the empire, where municipal careers were fixed, it was a normal route of entrance—though even there probably not the only one.[33]

The Egyptian evidence is not overwhelming, however. Only one case might hint at such a situation, though even that is far from certain.[34] Aurelios Silvanos, the youngest member of a family of magistrates and councillors, knows already that the council will appoint him as a magistrate (as a gymnasiarch, perhaps). The family tree shows political activity in three generations. The grandfather had been gymnasiarch before the institution of the councils, the father had held the gymnasiarchy and some other magistracy and had been councillor. It is striking that both older brothers, one of them deceased, were councillors, whereas Silvanos, the person about to be appointed to a magistracy, was not. Given the care with which titles were mentioned, it is highly unlikely that its omission was a simple mistake. Probably the explanation has to be sought in his age. Silvanos was 'about 24', and might not have been eligible for the council because he was too young. If the minimum age for entrance to the council was 25 (a possibility that will be discussed below) we might envisage a scenario in which Silvanos held a magistracy just before turning 25 and thereby gained entrance into the council.

This is perhaps an attractive interpretation, but it should be explicitly stated that it remains entirely conjectural.[35] If the minimum age of entry was 30 instead of 25 (a possibility also canvassed below) the

[33] Demographic calculations pertaining to the (incidentally contemporaneous) case of Canusium in Southern Italy show that the annual entrance of two magistrates was not enough to keep the council at a stable size; hence some councillors must have entered the council by other means. Cf. Mouritsen (1998), who considers the admission of councillors who had not been magistrate a late development in Italy, and esp. Jongman (1988) 317-326 and Scheidel (1999).

[34] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221).

[35] Note also that the text itself is in some crucial places restored.

explanation immediately falters. Further, even if the hypothesis could be proven to be correct and to be representative of more cases, it does not completely solve the problem of how candidates were admitted to the council. Not all councillors can have entered the council in the same way as Silvanos might have.

The problem lies in the discrepancy between the group of councillors and the group of magistrates. In the sources a substantial number of magistrates occur that were not councillors and a substantial number of councillors who had not been not magistrates.[36] The latter group had apparently found another way to be admitted. Undoubtedly, holding a magistracy would do no harm to the chances of becoming a councillor. However, it appears to have been neither sufficient nor necessary.

Of course formal qualifications existed for membership of the council. The exact qualifications remain largely unmentioned in our sources. Not all of them might have been formally expressed; some might have been tacitly assumed. We do not know either how strictly the criteria were applied; there is neither evidence for censors controlling entrance nor evidence for some official scrutiny.[37] This stands in clear contrast with the procedures for admission into the *ephebeia*, the class of metropolites, the gymnasial class, the *gerousia* and the corn dole, for which elaborate applications were filed by its prospective members. The difference is undoubtedly to be explained by the fact that in the case of the council formal qualifications alone were not sufficient for admittance.

Nevertheless, even in the absence of written documentation the general principles underlying admittance can easily be inferred. Just as everywhere else in the Roman Empire, the councils were composed of freeborn adult males of suitable standing and wealth.

It is very likely that councillors had to be freeborn. It is admittedly difficult to trace any hints of servile descent. Freedmen in Roman Egypt were not prone to mention their freedman-status, and they are not easily detectable by their names alone. Children of freedmen would easily submerge in the general population. What is certain is that there are no freedmen known as such among the councillors. Further, in Part Two Chapter Four it will be argued on the basis of the

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[36] For councillors non-magistrates see e.g. *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250). For magistrates non-councillors see e.g. the *agoranomos* in *B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1093 (265).

[37] Jouguet (1911) 365.

demographic characteristics of patterns of manumission that the ‘freedman problem’, the intrusion of people of servile background into the elite, was a phenomenon of minor importance in the *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt. Even if no formal requirement of freeborn descent existed, most councillors must have been freeborn anyway.

Residence may also have been a formal requirement.[38] In practice this meant that councillors may have possessed houses elsewhere, in the villages or in other towns, but that they needed to own a house in their home-town, and needed to be registered in that house. In a few cases persons from other *metropoleis* became councillor. Undoubtedly these were landowners in the nome of the *metropolis* they became councillor of; they may have well owned a house in the *metropolis*.[39] How this was achieved in the case of persons who combined the councillorship of one *metropoleis* with that of Alexandria is more difficult to establish. What is certain is that these persons were not absentee councillors: they are found in the nomes time and again. It would not be odd if they were also registered in the *metropoleis*.

Whether further requirements existed with respect to legal status apart from free birth and residence is difficult to say. We may perhaps suppose that metropolite status was required; or that it was implied in the requirement of residence.

The theory that membership of the gymnasial class was a requirement[40] has remained unsupported by any evidence and has little to commend itself.[41] The gymnasial class was a completely closed group that was instituted at the beginning of the Roman period, and comprised descendants of those members of the *metropoleis* that were considered Greek. Although gymnasial status undoubtedly would do no harm to one’s chances of becoming a councillor, an official requirement to be of gymnasial descent would have excluded far too

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[38] Bowman (1971) 25-26. Drew-Bear (1984) 322 rightly points out that there is no hard evidence that residence was required. However, there must have been some criterion to exclude wealthy landowning villagers.

[39] Cf. *S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9192 (314-315) with Bowman (1971) 26 n.14 for a possible transfer of councillorship from one town to another. *S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7814 (256), *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3296 (291), *S.B.* 20 (1997) 14290 (3rd cent.) and *P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1251 (252) have Antinoites as Oxyrhynchite councillors; in the latter case it may be relevant that the councillor is a highly successful athlete.

[40] Wegener (1946) 177; Bowman (1971) 29-30; Drew-Bear (1984) 318-319 with more caution. The theory is based on the more plausible though still unproven assumption that before 200 magistrates were recruited from the gymnasial class.

[41] This is also suggested by chronology. The gymnasial class disappeared by the end of the third century, whereas the councils remained in existence for much longer.

many respectable wealthy landowners. It is most unlikely that after two centuries others had not become wealthy and socially respected as well. Ethnic boundaries, as far as they were still visible at the beginning of the Roman period, seem to have lost much of their relevance by the third century. It is further to be noted that councillors normally do not mention gymnasial status and that the third-century declarations of the gymnasial class hardly show any elite families.[42]

Councillors were invariably men. No female councillors are known[43] and it is noticeable that during council meetings no woman ever made an appearance, not even as an outsider. The barring of the councillorship to women hardly needs to cause surprise, for it occurred everywhere in the Roman world, even in regions where women were allowed to have a somewhat larger share in municipal life.[44] Nevertheless, it is in one sense remarkable, because a substantial minority of landowners consisted of women. In the realm of administrative activity, there is some evidence for their participation in tax collection and there even exist a few hints of female magistrates,[45] but the councillorship was and remained reserved for men. In the case of the council, social imperatives must have been stronger than the temptation to attract additional sources of income.

Further, it is highly probable that there was a minimum age of entry. To begin with, there can be little doubt that in Egypt minors were excluded from the council. In the case of magistracies, minors (persons below 14) were frequently appointed, but the practice was never extended to membership of the council. Nor is there any other evidence for child councillors,[46] despite the fact that elsewhere in the Roman world children occasionally and as an exceptional honour could be made member of the council.[47]

The minimum age of entry into the council must have been below 36, for that is the (approximate) age of the youngest attested council-

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[42] Among the Oxyrhynchite councillors listed in the Appendix, none mentions gymnasial status.

[43] Relegating with N. Lewis, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 29 (1990) 38-40 the (rather late) female councillor of *S.B.* 20 (1977) 14284 (6th-7th cent) to the editor's fantasy.

[44] See van Bremen (1996) 55-56 for Asia Minor.

[45] See D. Hagedorn, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 110 (1996) 157-160 and the literature cited there.

[46] The one possible exception in *S.E.G.* 40 (1990) 1568 (220) has been convincingly removed by J. Bingen, *Chronique d'Égypte* 76 (2001) 209-229.

[47] Kleijwegt (1991) 221-334.

lor.[48] There are two cases that suggest it was above 24. One case has already been mentioned above. The magistrate-to-be Aurelios Silvanos, 'about 24', is not a councillor, while his older brothers seem to possess the councillorship.[49] The other case can be found in an early fourth-century marriage contract. In that document, the prospective husband is still under curatorship and hence must have been under 25. Given male patterns of marriage, he is unlikely to have been much younger. In the contract he has no titles added to his name, despite the fact that the status of his own family and the family of his bride make it likely he would enter the council the moment he could. All of his known male relatives were member of the council. He probably was not eligible because of his age.[50]

The minimum age of entry must therefore have been between 25 and 36. The evidence from other regions of the Roman Empire, where 25 and 30 were often used as minimum ages, makes it likely that the choice should be limited to either 25 or 30.[51] In the present state of the sources a choice between the two ages cannot be made.

It might be assumed that under normal circumstances people would enter the council shortly after they had reached the required minimum age. However, it should be realised that the intake of new members is unlikely to have been completely regular. Vacancies were dependent on the unpredictable patterns of mortality and therefore may have shown some irregularity. It would be unlikely that a suitable candidate would be passed over simply because in the year in which

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[48] *C.P.R.* 6 (1978) 73 (222-235) for a councillor of 'about 36'. *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) has not only a councillor of 'about 40', but also a deceased brother/councillor who was probably younger (though note that in the first case councillorship is restored, and in the latter case the identity of the person involved remains uncertain). *P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 182 (234) has a councillor of 'about 42'. The councillor mentioned in *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229) was probably born after 179, the year in which the first marriage of his father seems to have been terminated, see *P.Oxy.* 65 (1998) 4481 (179). This suggests he was at most 40 years old, and he might well have been younger. In *P.Harrauer* (2001) 35 (ca 250) a case is discussed of a councillor whose reconstructed age would be about 22, but the text under consideration (*Stud.Pal.* 20 (1921) 71 (268-270)) is stated to be in need of reedition and the ages look suspect.

[49] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221), though depending partly on restorations. A similar situation may lurk behind *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247), where only one of three brothers is councillor, but no ages are given there.

[50] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 5 (304), reed. *Analecta Papyrologica* 13 (2001) 81-90.

[51] An age of entry at age 30 was given in the *lex Pompeia*, Pl., *Ep.* 10.79-80 though the letters testify to pressure to lower it to 22.

he reached the required minimum age no vacancies arose. Nevertheless, it seems not too rash to assume that normally a councillor would enter the council around the minimum age of entrance.

There are very few instances where we can reconstruct the age of entry of individual councillors. At the moment when the councils were created at the beginning of the third centuries considerations of age played no role. The ages of these first councillors can therefore be left aside.[52] But the two other reconstructed ages of entrance are in one way or another exceptional as well and can therefore hardly be considered representative. There is one case of a councillor who in all probability was at least 26 when he was admitted to the council (and possibly older).[53] However, as Antinoite he was pressed into service in Oxyrhynchos, and does seem to have been rather reluctant to enter. In all probability another man only became councillor of Alexandria after completion of his military service. This must mean he was well above the minimum age of entrance.[54] However, his career is unparalleled among the hundreds of other councillors whose names survive.

The most important qualification was undoubtedly wealth. This was the case anywhere in the Roman Empire and it would have been very odd if it would have been otherwise in Egypt.

Whether a formal threshold existed in the form of a required minimum fortune remains open to doubt. There was one elsewhere in

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[52] Cf. *P.Lond.* 2 (1898) 348, col. 1 (203) for a councillor of 61 only a short time after the creation of the councils. In *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) patterns of paternity suggest that the father was at least 40 and possibly older when he entered the council. Cf. also *P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289), where a great-grandfather is mentioned as councillor. The wide variation is ages of paternity makes it impossible to be certain, but one can easily imagine he entered the council at the beginning of the century well over the required minimum age.

[53] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1119 (253) presents a dossier of a complaint of twins from Antinoopolis against nomination to Oxyrhychite liturgies. In the year 244/245 they had been nominated, but had successfully pointed to their exempt status as Antinoites. However, in *S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7814 (256) we find one of them as councillor and *kosmetes* of Oxyrhynchos, whereas it is clear from the dossier that up until Mesore (approximately August) 253 he still enjoyed exempt status. Formally, liturgists had to be older than 14, but in practice no liturgists are found below 18. If he was 18 or older in 244/245, he must have been at least 26 in 253. See Bowman (1971) 150 for the chronology.

[54] *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1646 (268 and 270) mentioning the heirs of a Vibios Poublios, honourably discharged veteran, former *officialis* of the prefect of Egypt, former (= deceased) councillor of Alexandria. The absence of magistracies might imply he was older still and/or died shortly after being admitted into the council. See Scheidel (1996a) 93-138 for age of entrance and length of service.

the Roman Empire, but no references are made to it in Egypt.[55] Given the prevailing levels of mortality, many councillors will have entered the council in possession of the paternal inheritance. But it has to be realised that it is likely that some other men entered the council at a moment when their parents were still alive. At that moment they might still have lived in their parents' household, whether married or not. They will not have had obtained the inheritances that would form the core of their fortunes and hence will have owned little property of their own. As one councillor put it, trying to escape the imposition of yet another liturgy: "I am of modest means, I am fed by my father"—clearly implying he still lived in his father's household.[56] In such cases a formal threshold is less likely.

However, the formal existence of a property qualification is by and large an academic question, because in practice there certainly will have been the requirement to have access to wealth. Local politics were after all a costly affair. Councillors were supposed to take up costly magistracies and liturgies.

Any property threshold—formalised or not—is likely to have varied between larger and smaller towns. Depending on the variation in council size, which will be discussed in the next section, property qualifications might have been relatively large in larger *metropoleis* and smaller in the smaller ones.

How much wealth was needed for the councillorship can be indirectly inferred from what is known about the wealth of individual councillors. The evidence we have pertains to the larger *metropoleis*: it stems from Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis. In Oxyrhynchos, one councillor's wife left behind 200,000 drachmas, making it likely her husband owned at least as much. This might be taken to suggest a threshold with a similar order of magnitude.[57] Prices for arable land

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[55] For formal thresholds outside Egypt see Duncan-Jones (1982^2) 147. The concept of a πόρος, a property qualification, was widely used in the liturgic system, but precisely for this reason it may not have been used for admittance into the council. The πό]ρ[ους βου]λευτικούς, 'councillor's property qualifications', mentioned in *S.B.* 3 (1926-1927) 7261 (late 3rd-early 4th cent.) line 7 rests on a conjecture that is not corroborated by further attestations. Wilcken's remark in *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 8 (1927) 314 "[d]ie für Z. 4, 5, und 6 vorgeschlagenen Ergänzungen erscheinen mir noch nicht befriedigend" should therefore be extended to line 7.

[56] Ptolemaios s. of Damarion in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.) line 12: μέτριος εἰμι, παρὰ πατρὶ τρέφομαι.

[57] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237). Drew-Bear (1984) 322 also points to *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.), where a similar sum is mentioned as an inheritance. However, none of the persons involved is known with certainty to have been council-

hovered widely in the third century even before inflation set in. At the convenient but somewhat arbitrarily chosen price of 500 drachmas per aroura,[58] the property qualification of this councillor would then be in the order of 400 arouras.

More direct evidence comes from Hermopolis. The Hermopolite land register discussed extensively in the previous chapter shows that in reality the property qualification must have been much lower. The register contains a quarter of all urban landowners. If the councils of larger *metropoleis* consisted of 100 members (for which see below), and if the councils were composed of the wealthiest adult males of the town, the corollary is that the wealthiest twenty-five landowners of the Hermopolite register would be included in the council. The register shows that in that case the threshold must have been in the order of 100 arouras. Exactly 25 persons owned 100 arouras and over.[59] To Egyptian standards 100 arouras would form a relatively low threshold, but it is difficult to interpret the Hermopolite evidence otherwise. Converted back into third-century prices 100 arouras would suggest a threshold in the order of 50,000 drachmas[60], which in the light of comparative evidence from the western part of the Roman Empire does not appear implausible.[61]

What is certain is that entrance money had to be paid upon admittance, on the analogy of the crown money that magistrates had to pay

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lor. A.K. Bowman speculates in *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233) that the threshold might have been 100,000 dr., ten times the entrance fee (for which see below).

[58] See Drexhage (1991) 127-135.

[59] See Bowman (1985) 159 on *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F (after 346/347). Note that some of the owners were women, others might have been minors, so the threshold might have been lower still. The numbers involved are small, however. Note also that a larger council size would result in even lower property qualifications. It is unfortunate that in the register only few landowners can be identified as councillor—titles were infrequently mentioned. See *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) p. 19 and Lewuillon-Blume (1985) and (1988) for some external identifications of councillors, not all equally certain. These concern Herminos s. of Kolon (181 arouras in F), Melites s. Hermes (19 arouras in both registers), Philammon s. of Hermes (34 arouras in G, 41 arouras in F), Okeanios s. of Dioskourides (168 arouras in F), Philippos s. of Herm[ ] (3 arouras in F). The lower part of the range of attested landholdings is remarkable (though apparently not to Lewuillon-Blume, who failed to comment on the discrepancy between wealth and status). Three explanations are possible, not mutually exclusive: some of the identifications might be incorrect, some of the persons involved had holdings elsewhere or the status of the council had severely declined by the middle of the fourth century.

[60] At the convenient round pre-inflation price of 500 dr. per aroura; cf. Drexhage (1991) 127-135.

[61] Duncan-Jones (1982^2) 108-109 and 216-217.

upon entering office.[62] Again, it is likely that the height of the sum differed between smaller and larger towns. At Oxyrhynchos, one receipt shows that this sum was at least 10,000 drachmas, and possibly more—a relatively large amount compared to the census. Apparently the principal was not actually paid, but borrowed from the funds of the council and paid back with interest. The arrangements suggest that at least some councillors did in reality not pay entrance money upon admittance but paid the sum in instalments. We may suppose it was secured on their property.[63]

Council Size

Having obtained some idea about the composition of the councils, it is also important to establish their size. As councillorship was the prime mechanism through which membership of the elite was demarcated, establishing its size allows us to make comparisons with the landowning elite as discussed in the previous chapter.

To start with, it is highly probable that the town councils of individual towns had a fixed size, if only because such was standard practice in the Roman Empire. There are in fact some indications in the evidence from Roman Egyptian corroborating this idea. Firstly, contradictory though it may sound, a fixed size is implied by an imperial letter allowing the Antinoites to enlarge their council with 25 members.[64] As we would only suspect, council size was subject to official regulation and could therefore only be adapted after permission of the Roman government. Secondly, occasionally reference is made to an *album*, a register of councillors.[65] Such a fixation of membership might also suggest a fixed size. Lastly, there is one case of a super-

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[62] For entrance fees, see Garnsey (1971); Bowman (1971) 26-27; *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233) introduction; Duncan-Jones (1982²) 82-88 with 108-109 no. 345-348 for Africa and 147-155 for Italy; Quass (1993) 328-334 for the East.

[63] *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233) with Bowman (1971) 26-27. Added complications are that in this text it is not the councillor himself who is paying the interest but his heirs and that no mention is made of repayment of the principal.

[64] *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13776 (241/242 A.D) (discussed below).

[65] Bowman (1971) 23-24, mentioning *S.B.* 3 (1926) 7261(3rd-early 4th cent.); cf. *P.Oxy.* 24 (1957) 2407 (late 3rd cent.) for an album of magistrates. Add *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13776 (241/242 A.D), though the terms are restored, new and different. It is unfortunate that no such album survives. Cf. *S.E.G.* 47 (1997) 2123 (3rd cent. B.C.) for an example on stone from Naukratis of earlier date.

numerary councillor, which only makes sense if the council had a *numerus fixus*.[66]

Conventionally, the councils of the *metropoleis* are thought to have had a size of 100 members.[67] Although this assumption seems reasonably enough, solid evidence for such a figure is lacking. There is not a single town of Roman Egypt of which the size of the council is known with certainty.[68] And even if we had figures for individual councils, the question is not only what the absolute figure of its membership is, but also, whether council size would be uniform in all towns. Smaller towns might have differed from larger ones, *poleis* from *metropoleis*, Alexandria from the others.

Evidence from elsewhere helps to limit the range of possibilities somewhat. In the eastern part of the Roman empire councils varied considerably in size. The sizes seem not only to have been a function of the importance and population size of the towns, but also to depend on other factors. Attested sizes range from a high 600 to a low 50.[69] In the western part of the empire, council size varied also from place to place, but the degree of variation was much smaller. A size of 100 members might have been the norm, but many of the attested council sizes turn out to have been different. The smallest attested size is 30, the largest 130.[70] The councils of the third-century Egyptian *metropoleis* might with equal justification be regarded as 'eastern' because of the rather flexible order in which magistracies could be held, as they might be seen as 'western' because they were a Roman creation.

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66 *P.Lips.* 1 (1906) 18 (308).

67 Wegener (1946) 172 arrived at a council of 100 members, but based herself on a sequence of incorrect arguments about the Oxyrhynchite council, carefully dismantled by Bowman (1971) 22 n.1. The growing consensus (or the turning of hypothesis into fact) can be followed from Bowman (1971) 22 onwards. Bowman seemed to favour a council size of 100 on comparative grounds, though he exerted much caution and added perceptive comments about the scope for variation. This was turned by Drew-Bear (1984) 321 into "sans dépasser beaucoup une centaine de members", by Bowman (1996^2) 70-71 into "consisting of perhaps as many as one hundred councillors", by Bagnall (1993) 56 into "probably nowhere more than 100", while Rowlandson (1996) 124 writes in the case of the Oxyrhynchite council that "one might guess that it had 100 members".

68 I take *S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7696 (after Aug., 249) to be irrelevant to the issue. According to Wegener (1946) 172 the text implied that the Arsinoite council was smaller than 300 members, but she read too much into the text. See also Bowman (1971) 22.

69 A. Balland, Fouilles *de Xanthos VII. Inscriptions d'époque impériale du Létôon* (Paris 1981) 212-213 for an overview.

70 See Duncan-Jones (1982^2) 283-287; Nicols (1988); Mouritsen (1998) 234-238.

Given the fact that none of the *metropoleis* was very large, the comparative evidence suggests that we should not expect councils in the *metropoleis* to have been larger than approximately 300 members.

A further consideration is that some standardisation is to be expected, because the councils of the *metropoleis* and of Alexandria were all created at a single moment. With regard to the *metropoleis* it is easiest to reduce the number of possibilities to two. The first and simplest possibility is that all councils had a uniform size—possibly but not necessarily 100. The second and more complex possibility is that the councils sizes corresponded with town size. The larger the population of the *metropolis*, the larger the size of its council. In such a proportionate system, larger towns like Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis had the largest council, while small towns like Ombos had a smaller council.[71] The absolute numbers and the degree of differentiation remain, again, to be determined. The size of Alexandria's council may in a uniform system have been the same as the councils of the *metropoleis*, but it could also have been larger. In a proportionate system, it cannot but have possessed the largest council. How the earlier created councils of Naukratis, Ptolemais and Antinoopolis fit into these schemes (if at all) must remain an open question.

As has been stated already, we do not have any figure for any council of Roman Egypt. Nevertheless, the evidence does offer some hints and it is worth exploring them. Although the size of Alexandria's council is not our main concern, it is in theory of some importance. Its size can be used as an upper limit for the sizes of the other councils, for it is most unlikely that any of the councils of the *metropoleis* would be larger than Alexandria's. What can be said with a reasonable degree of certainty is that the council of Alexandria can hardly have counted fewer than 100 members. As will be discussed later in this chapter, many members of the Alexandrian council had ties with the *metropoleis*, and at least some were in fact upwardly mobile members of the local elites. Almost all Alexandrian councillors are known through their activities in the *metropoleis*, not from their presence in Alexandria. The local distributions of Alexandrians conform more or less to the geographical distribution of inscriptions and papyri. This suggests that all *metropoleis* contributed some members to the council of Alexandria. Not all *metropoleis* need to have con-

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[71] Evidence for a similar proportionate system in Baetica has been inferred from some stipulations of the lex Irnitana by Nicols (1988).

tributed councillors in equal measure, but with the approximately 40-50 *metropoleis* that Egypt counted, an Alexandrian council smaller than 100 members would surely have had too little room to accommodate all. It is therefore likely that the council of Alexandria was larger, though we cannot say by how much.

For the *metropoleis*, the best evidence for council size comes from Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis. It is of an unconventional and indirect nature, however. It is based on probabilities, not facts. Three arguments point in the same direction of a council size of 100 members in the case of these two large *metropoleis*.

In the case of Oxyrhynchos, we possess so many names of councillors that it is possible to make some calculations based on counts of names. In theory, such calculations could also be made for other *metropoleis*, but the evidence from there is too meagre to be of real use.[72]

As we saw earlier, the minimum age of entry into the council is likely to have been 25 or 30. On the assumption of more or less regular patterns of intake all or at least most councillors entered the council around one of these ages. Model life tables suggest that at that moment the average remaining life expectancy was in the order of 25 years: 26.6 years at age 25, 23.9 at age 30.[73] As councillorship was held for life, an average councillor would be a member of the council for approximately 25 years. This implies that in the course of a century approximately four persons in succession would have occupied every seat in the council. With an age of entrance at 25, this would be 3.8 persons, with age of entrance of 30, this figure would be 4.2 persons.

We can now make two calculations. The Appendix in this book consists of a list of all attested third-century councillors of Oxyrhynchos. It lists 223 names. In order to produce a minimum estimate, we might for the sake of calculation assume that the list is complete. In other words: the fiction is maintained that there are no councillors who have escaped attestation. To obtain the minimum size of the

[72] Although the lists of councillors of Calderini (1951) are outdated, they indicate that the number of attested councillors in other *metropoleis* is substantially lower. For an updated list of Alexandrian councillors, see Delia (1991).

[73] Coale, Demeny and Vaughan (1983^2) model West level 3 males $e_{(25)} = 26.614$; $e_{(30)} = 23.896$. Cf. Part Two Chapter Two.

council we have to divide the figure of 223 by 3.8 or 4.2. This results in a minimum council size of 53.1-58.6 councillors.[74]

This figure presents a minimum, for it is rather unlikely that all councillors are attested in our documentation. In fact, the stream shows no sign of drying up. Every decade of publication of Oxyrhynchite papyri brings to light new councillors.[75] However, as the minimum figure is relatively high, it is of some use. Estimates for council size below 50 can be safely ignored.

A second estimate increases this minimum figure to more realistic outcomes, but at the cost of an increase in the margin of error. The calculation can be made on the basis of the same material by looking at what might be termed onomastic survival rates, the proportions of attested persons to persons ever holding office.

The Appendix lists the names of a substantial number of presidents of the council. The presidency was the only office whose term of office remained annual throughout the third century. It was never shared with more persons. Reiteration occurred, but not frequently, and there are also some other minor irregularities, but overall the presidency can be regarded as a stable office. Therefore, in the course of one hundred years, there must have been in principle exactly 100 presidents. This figure can be used to establish the onomastic survival rate of presidents.

In Oxyrhynchos the actual figure was slightly lower, because of a few cases of reiteration of office. In the Appendix, there are 49 persons who held 54 presidencies. With this rate of reiteration, the 100 presidencies covering the whole century should be expected to have been held by 91 persons. As 49 names are surviving, this results in an onomastic survival rate of third-century presidents of 53.8%. The fact that this rate is so high shows how well third-century Oxyrhynchos is covered by the papyri.

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[74] For the sake of completeness, it should be remarked that the highest number of councillors attested in a single Oxyrhynchite papyrus is twenty, see *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250), a list of signatures that may originally have been longer. The figure of twenty thus presents a minimum for the size of the Oxyrhynchite council, but as it is relatively low, it is of limited use.

[75] Compare Calderini (1951), listing 86 councillors (though the list omitted presidents who were not councillor) and Bowman (1971) app. 1, listing 193 councillors. But note that an increase in published documents in which councillors occur does not necessarily mean that the total number of councillors increases to the same degree: it is also likely to increase the number of identifications between homonyms.

This onomastic survival rate can be used further. If the same rate applied to *all* 223 attested third-century councillors, there were 414 councillors throughout the third century. Divided by 3.8 to 4.2 to take into account their average length of councillorship, the council must have consisted of 98.5 to 108.9 members.

Although this figure hovers neatly around the figure of 100, it should be conceded that it might need some correction, as it is possible that the actual onomastic survival rate of ordinary councillors fell slightly below that of presidents. Presidents were probably more visible than ordinary councillors. If this was the case, ordinary councillors might have been less well attested, which would imply an increase in council size. However, although the exact onomastic survival rate of ordinary councillors is unknown,[76] it is unlikely to have been substantially lower than that of the presidents. Although hard evidence is lacking to establish the exact size of the council, it seems safe to conclude that the Oxyrhynchite council had a size in the order of 100 members.

Such a figure would tally well with the data from Hermopolis. The fourth-century land registers discussed repeatedly above show that only approximately 100 landowners owned holdings of 100 arouras and over.[77] If the threshold was 100 arouras, the council will have consisted of 100 members. There certainly is an element of circularity in the argument, because both figures are unknown. However, it is important to realise that as both figures are relatively low, they hold each other in check. The room for manoeuvre is limited. Either council size becomes too low, or the threshold becomes implausible. Increasing council size has direct repercussions on the wealth of its members. A council of 300 members would have far too many small landowners to be a viable institution. Even with a low threshold of 100 arouras, all 100 landowners would have to be included in the council. Although hard evidence is lacking, the suggestion again is that the council of a larger *metropolis* like Hermopolis would have been in the order of 100 persons.

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[76] And unintentional data massaging might be at work. As Bowman (1971) used more inclusive criteria in compiling his lists of presidents, his list contained *more* presidents and less ordinary councillors than the present Appendix. This would lead not only to a different onomastic survival rate for presidents (60.4%), but also to a different, smaller, council size of 76.0-84.1 persons. The possibilities for error are also in other respects large: much depends on the assumptions about length of councillorship.

[77] *P.Herm.Landl.* (1978) F (after 346/347) with Bowman (1985) 159.

The conventional and convenient council size of 100 therefore turns out to be not too bad a guess, at least for Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis. What would such a figure imply for other *metropoleis*? In a uniform size scenario, the situation is simple. All councils of the *metropoleis* would count 100 members. In a proportionate system, the size of 100 forms an upper limit. As Oxyrhynchos was one of the larger towns of Roman Egypt, we may expect that similar sized towns like Hermopolis and Arsinoe had a council of the same size, and that smaller councils would have councils below the 100 mark. The figure of 100 thus either forms the actual size of all councils, or the size of the larger councils. Independent of the question whether all council sizes were the same or whether a proportionate system was used, it can be used as a ceiling for the council sizes of the other *metropoleis*.

The only other hints we have concern unfortunately not councils of other *metropoleis* but those of the Greek *poleis* Naukratis and Antinoopolis. In the case of Naukratis, the old Greek *emporion* turned *polis* in the Delta, there is an inscription dating from the third century *before* Christ.[78] The two surviving columns of the text present 40 names, distributed over 4 tribes of each 10 names. It has been suggested that this list of names presents an *album* of councillors. If this is correct (and there is little reason not to think so) it provides a minimum figure of 40 for the council size of Naukratis. That the list continued beyond what survives is certainly possible; on the basis of its layout each column can be expected to have added another 20 names. The implication is that the council of Naukratis consisted of 40 councillors at minimum; or of 40 plus multiples of 20 members: 60 or 80 or 100, and so on. It might also be inferred from the layout of the stone that very high figures, in the couples of hundreds, are improbable.[79] A size of 100 members, in line with the supposed figure for the third-century council of Oxyrhynchos, would certainly be possible, but a slightly lower or higher figure cannot be excluded.

However, even if the actual figure could be obtained, the problem is what it would imply. The figure refers to a Greek *polis*, in the remote past. Who knows how much changed over the course of half a millennium? Very little is known about Naukratis in the Roman pe-

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[78] *S.E.G.* 47 (1997) 2123 (3rd cent. B.C.) with Scholl (1997).

[79] Scholl (1997) 223-224 favours one or two more blocks of the same size, hence a total of 40, 80 or 120 names. No further tribe names are known from other texts, but this need not say much, as Naukratis is not well covered by the sources.

riod. Ironically, it has even been suggested that Naukratis possessed no council at all in the first two centuries.[80] However, even if it could be assumed that the Naukratite council of the Roman period continued to have a size of 100 members, would such a size have a bearing on the councils of the *metropoleis*?

The other piece of evidence concerns yet another Greek *polis*, Antinoopolis, although it does not stem from the remote past but from the third century. Despite the fact that it is roughly contemporaneous with the evidence from Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis, it is again uncertain what it implies.

In a fragmentarily preserved imperial pronouncement of Gordian, dating to 241/242, the emperor replies to what must have been a request for the enlargement of the Antinoite council. Whatever else he may have said, it seems reasonably certain that the emperor allowed twenty-five new councillors to be added to the council: "so it is allowed for you to add twenty-five (councillors) to the current councillors".[81] Unfortunately, neither the past council size nor the resulting new size is mentioned in what survives of the text, and it might not have been mentioned at all. The choice of the number of 25 councillors is suggestive, however. To be effective, the addition must have been made on a relatively small council. An addition of 25 members on a total of, say, 300 members would have been too ineffective to be likely. It also seems likely that the figure of 25 had some numerical relation to the original size of the council. We might therefore envisage the Antinoite council as consisting of multiples of 25 members: 50, 75, 100, and so on, to, say, 125.

What we have, then, is little more than hints. The evidence is meagre. We might have a council in Alexandria of a couple of hundred members, in Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis of (around) 100 members, in Naukratis of 40, 60, 80 or 100, in Antinoopolis of 50, 75, 100 or 125. All these figures are based on inferences. In the present state of the evidence, with no council sizes of smaller *metropoleis* known, it

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[80] N. Lewis, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 18 (1981) 78-80 on *P.Oxy.* 3 (1903) 473 (138-160), addressed to the magistrates and people of a town whose name is lost. Lewis argues that as *metropoleis* lacked a *demos*, this letter can only have been addressed to a Greek *polis*, which on the basis of the surviving traces of the name must have been Naukratis. The implication is then that Naukratis must have lacked a council, just as Alexandria. I remain doubtful, because Lewis' argument creates as many problems as it solves. A councillor of Naukratis is (again?) attested in *P.Genf.* 1^2 (2002) 10 (316).

[81] *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13776 (241/242 A.D).

remains impossible to determine whether council size was proportionate or uniform.

If the arguments presented above are correct, however, we can limit the choices. If the Oxyrhynchite council consisted of 100 members, and if Oxyrhynchos formed one of the largest *metropoleis*, we can use its council size as an upper limit for the other *metropoleis*. The Greek *poleis* seem to have had councils that had the same order of magnitude: their council sizes seem to cover a spectrum from a couple of tens to slightly over 100 members. Their council sizes did not deviate dramatically from those of the *metropoleis*. We end up with a structure, then, in which Alexandria's council may have consisted of a couple of hundreds members, in which the larger *metropoleis* would have a council of 100, and the smaller ones either a council of couple of tens of members, or a similar size of 100 members.

A Regional Elite

There can be no doubt that the councils formed the main elite institution of the *metropoleis*. Nevertheless it still needs to be determined whether the councils contained the top of the local social and economic pyramid or were put in the shadow of a regional elite. The existence of such a regional elite is only to be expected, as it occurred in other regions of the Roman empire as well. A regional elite may not seem to be of much relevance for issues of elite formation if it had no influence on the civic life of the *metropoleis*. However, this was certainly the case in Roman Egypt.

In Roman Egypt, this regional elite can be identified with the elite of Alexandria. This elite might therefore be called regional, provincial or Alexandrian without difference in meaning. It comprised two groups which in practice are not easily distinguishable. On the one hand, there were upwardly mobile members of the local elites, people who possessed so much wealth and status that their local peers were no real match for them. It was only natural for them to extend their ambitions and their social and economic network to the regional capital, to Alexandria. The other part of the regional elite consisted of wealthy inhabitants of Alexandria. If it is assumed that the Alexandrian elite based its wealth primarily on landholdings, it has to be realised that Alexandria possessed no land of its own to speak of. In the absence of substantial holdings outside Egypt, the holdings of Alex-

andrians must have been located in the nomes. In as much as the Alexandrian elite consisted of landowners, it was therefore economically tied to the nomes.

This regional elite is not always easily discernable in the evidence. The problem is that there do not exist similar clear-cut institutional boundaries as is the case with the councils. There were no membership-cards for the regional elite. Some members of the regional elite possessed councillorship of Alexandria, but others did not, or, more likely, did not always mention it. There is not a single criterion that can be used for identification. The Alexandrian elite therefore forms a more elusive group than the members of the councils of the *metropoleis*. Although many of its characteristics are well-known to papyrologists, it is worth analysing this group in more detail from a social perspective.[82]

Broadly speaking, there are two major indications for identification. The first is obvious: the holding of Alexandrian offices and Alexandrian councillorship. The second is somewhat more indirect. We know that the personnel of the lower layers of the Roman administration involved in the supervision of the nomes was recruited from the highest levels of urban society. Whenever *strategoi* and royal scribes are encountered, they are likely to have been members of the regional elite.

What is interesting is that this regional elite was integrated with the local elites in many ways. The level of integration goes so far that it has not always well been realised that the regional elite actually exists as an analytically separate category. For the subject of elite formation in the *metropoleis*, the group is therefore of more than academic interest. It is of relevance for the question how economic differentiation was reflected in social status. It also touches on the relation between the local elites and the rest of the world. It is relevant for our ideas of patronage, hierarchies and networks. A closer look is therefore in order.

One important part of the administrative apparatus of Roman Egypt consisted of the *strategoi* and royal scribes. These were the state administrators of the nomes, with the royal scribe in a subordi-

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[82] I have not been able to consult M. Abd-el-Ghani, 'Alexandria and Middle Egypt: Some Aspects of Social and Economic Contacts under Roman Rule', in: W.V. Harris and G. Ruffini (eds.), *Ancient Alexandria between Egypt and Greece* (Leiden 2004) 161-178.

nate position to the *strategos*.[83] At the local level, the *strategoi* were very important persons. They acted as judges, as administrators, were responsible for tax collection, and so on. The balance of power had shifted somewhat from the *strategoi* to the councils after 200, but *strategoi* remained important. The combined rule of *strategos* and council was not free from tension.

It is therefore of more than a little irony that the *strategos* was recruited from the upper reaches of the same stratum from which the councillors were recruited. The *strategeia* was in fact the highest position attainable for members of the local elite.[84] The next position in the bureaucratic hierarchy was that of the *epistrategos*, who was in charge of groups of nomes. However, *epistrategoi* were Roman knights who were recruited from outside Egypt.[85]

Strategoi and royal scribes on average served for a period of slightly less than three years. Until the end of the third century, they did not serve in their own nome, undoubtedly to avoid conflicts of interests. Some served for more than one term, usually not in the same nome; some royal scribes became *strategos* later in their career.

From a social point of view, the *strategoi* and royal scribes form an elusive group. Despite the fact that we know that they were recruited from the regional elite, their exact background is hard to reconstruct in individual cases.

The first problem is caused by the fact that *strategoi* and royal scribes served outside their own nome. It is usually not known what their hometown was. They have Hellenised names that do not have specific regional characteristics. The evidence from the nomes that are relatively well-covered in our documentation therefore concerns as a rule outsiders. No matter how well we are able to reconstruct the third-century *strategoi* and royal scribes of particular nomes, we still end up with mere lists of individuals of unknown origin and with unknown ties.[86]

The situation changes when at the end of our period *strategoi* begin to be recruited locally. Ties between *strategoi* and local families

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[83] For the *strategoi*, see the introduction of Whitehorne (1988), for the *basilikos grammateus*, see now the massive monograph of Kruse (2002).

[84] Cf. Whitehorne (1988) 606, 608.

[85] Thomas (1982) 50-56.

[86] The use of the extensive lists of Bastianini and Whitehorne (1987) beyond purely papyrological purposes is therefore limited. For an extensive discussion of the little that is known about the origins of royal scribes see Kruse (2002) 907-921.

become somewhat more visible. Thus, the early fourth-century Oxyrhynchite *strategos* Aurelios Dioskourides-Ioulianos is likely to be a son of the Oxyrhynchite and Alexandrian magistrate and councillor Aurelios Ioulianos-Dioskourides attested at the end of the third century.[87]

The second problem is that *strategoi* and royal scribes almost never mention the offices that they can be supposed to have held locally. There are only few cases where local careers can be reconstructed for *strategoi* and royal scribes. Most evidence pertains to an Alexandrian background, but this need not exclude a local origin, too. Some *strategoi* are *hypomnematographoi.* This was a high-ranking office in Alexandria,[88] but it is to be noted that these office-holders are invariably attested in the *metropoleis*.[89] One royal scribe of Hermopolis subsequently became imperial high priest in Alexandria and in that capacity erected on behalf of the town an inscription for the emperor's mother.[90] There is the occasional former gymnasiarch.[91] Such examples notwithstanding, given the fact that there are hundreds of attestations of *strategoi*, the number of attested local offices is very low.

The explanation for the omission of local offices is probably simple. For their functioning as *strategos* it was neither relevant nor did it in any way help to mention previous magistracies or councillorship. They may also have been regarded as conceptually different titles. The *strategeia* may not have been perceived as the summit of a local career, but as a rather different step. However that may be, the relation between the *strategos* and the council in the nomes was an uneasy one. One dossier of correspondence of the *strategos* of the Panopolite nome testifies to endless conflicts between him and the president of the Panopolite council.[92] It seems likely that such situations were endemic.[93] It was probably helpful for a *strategos* to disso-

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[87] For the former see *P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293) and *S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9502 (296), for the latter the refs. in *P.Oxy.* 54 (1987) app. 1.

[88] See Whitehorne (1987).

[89] *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 59 (292); possibly *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1255 (292) (deputy-*strategos*); *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2712 (292/293) (deputy-*strategos*); *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3569 (282); *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3571 (286); *P.Oxy.* 59 (1992) 3980 (300/302).

[90] *I.Alex.* (1994) 12 (211).

[91] *P.Tebt.* 2 (1907) 313 (210-211); Bastianini and Whitehorne (1987) 19 on Sarapion-Phanias.

[92] *P.Panop.Beatty* (1964) 1 (298). Unpublished work by K. Hopkins analyses the tensions.

[93] E.g. in *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2341 (208) a conflict about tax-collection between a

ciate oneself from one's own background in order to create as much social distance as possible.

Prosopographical research into the ties of *strategoi* and royal scribes with the local elite of their own towns is therefore difficult. It is well nigh impossible to determine to what extent families of *strategoi* and royal scribes were involved in the local politics of their hometown. There are only few exceptions. One of these is the minor son of a royal scribe of the 'territory of the Alexandrians' who was gymnasiarch in Oxyrhynchos.[94] The family of Sarapion-Apollonianos shows the interrelation between local offices, Alexandrian offices and state offices. One of the family members, a councillor and gymnasiarch of Oxyrhynchos, became royal scribe and *strategos* in Hermopolis and served in the Arsinoite nome as well. One of his sons, likewise gymnasiarch and councillor in Oxyrhynchos, became *strategos* of the Hermopolite nome. He was married to the daughter of an Alexandrian councillor.[95] Nevertheless, although such patterns must have been regular, it is telling that no-one else of the more than 200 Oxyrhynchite councillors whose names survive can be identified with certainty with a *strategos* or a royal scribe.

A more detailed perspective on the regional elite is offered by the Alexandrians that are found locally. From almost all areas of Egypt from which we have documentary evidence, Alexandrian officeholders and councillors can be found. Most of the attested Alexandrians originate from Oxyrhynchos, but they are also found elsewhere. They appear in other Middle Egyptian nomes, but also for example in Koptos and Panopolis in Upper Egypt, and also in the otherwise obscurely attested Pachnemounis, a *metropolis* in the Delta.[96]

It is in fact hard to find Alexandrian families not somehow connected to the *chora*, but we have to keep in mind that the evidence is biased. As Alexandria forms a dark spot in our evidence, we lack most of the sources from Alexandria itself. Inscriptions from Alexandria are relatively scarce and almost all the evidence about Alexandria originates from the *chora*.

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council president and a *strategos* is fought out before the prefect.

94 *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.).

95 Moioli (1987).

96 The lists of Alexandrian magistrates and councillors in Delia (1991) 147-161 provide a helpful starting point, though it should be noted that some of her references are incomplete.

A related issue is that we are at the mercy of the ways Alexandrians chose to represent themselves. Consider the case of Antiochos-Dionysios. In one text he was called gymnasiarch, councillor of Oxyrhynchos, in another magistrate of Alexandria. Both texts were written after his death, so it can be excluded that the different titles were a result of a political career.[97] Apparently both titles could be used interchangeably.

How the elite of Alexandria was exactly composed and whether it was tied completely to the nomes is therefore difficult to say.[98] There are some members of the Alexandrian elite who do not seem to have ties with the hinterland, but we may suppose that they considered themselves of too high status to mention any local ties, independent of the question whether they had them. There is also the possibility discussed in the previous chapter that some Alexandrians derived at least a part of their income from large-scale business ventures. This might suggest economic independence from the *chora*, though it has to be realised that it need not automatically exclude either local activity or landed interests as well.

In some cases, members of the Alexandrian elite do in themselves show little connection with the *chora*, but they are betrayed by the fact that their names are mentioned in papyri and inscriptions found locally.[99] Thus, an Alexandrian *kosmetes*, *exegetes* and *hypomnematographos* appears alongside an Alexandrian councillor in an Oxyrhynchite list of important persons.[100] A veteran, *officialis* of the prefect and councillor of Alexandria, is mentioned in another Oxyrhynchite papyrus.[101] Two inscriptions from Pachnemounis mention families of Alexandrians.[102]

Such local occurrences are plainly the result of economic ties. Wealthy Alexandrians must of necessity have owned their property locally. There are in fact many Alexandrians who are known to have

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[97] *P.Stras.* 4 (1963) 261 (296) and *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 102 (306). As his daughter occurs in both, there can be no doubt that this was the same man in both texts. A similar situation might be observed with Sept. Eudaimon, for which see the Appendix. In most texts he is a local magistrate with Oxyrhynchite councillorship, but in one text he appears to be *kosmetes* of Alexandria.

[98] This subject deserves more study than can be offered here. Delia (1991) and Haas (1997) have disappointingly little to say on the subject.

[99] Cf. Drew-Bear (1984) 316-317.

[100] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1498 (bef. 299).

[101] *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1646 (268 and 270).

[102] *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 557 (shortly after 212); *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 558 (mid-late 3rd cent.).

had holdings in the nomes. “I am an Alexandrian owning much land in the Hermopolite nome” one person describes himself.[103] We find an Alexandrian buying Oxyrhynchite land adjacent to his holdings in the nome.[104] Four children of an Alexandrian landowner divide an enormous estate in Hermopolis.[105] We find vineyards[106] and flocks[107] in the hands of Alexandrians.

Such property holdings could be enormous. One Alexandrian councillor owned over 200 arouras in the surroundings of the village of Karanis alone, probably more than many Arsinoite councillors would own in the whole nome.[108] The Hermopolite estate mentioned above has been estimated to exceed the 1000 arouras.[109] Some Alexandrians are described as Roman knights, which must mean that the value of their property exceeded the 400,000 drachmas.[110] Women carrying the title *matrona stolata* belong to the same class.[111] The holdings of local councillors were dwarfed by such property.

Economic interests explain why so many Alexandrian members of the elite are attested in documents from the nomes. They also explain the creation of economic and social networks. One of the general characteristics of the large landholdings of antiquity was that the owners were often absentee landlords. Holdings were spread out over large territories, and managed by overseers. The owners lived in the towns, away from their lands. Such was the case for example with Appianos, owner of a large estate in the Fayum. He lived in Alexan-

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[103] *P.Flor* 3 (1915) 382 (bef. Nov. 222) lines 35-36.
[104] *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2723 (3rd cent.).
[105] *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (269) with el Abbadi.
[106] *P.Berl.Leihg.* 1 (1932) 23 (252).
[107] *P.Lond.* 3 (1907) 851 (216-219).
[108] *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 9 (after Nov. 309) lines 20 and 49 (Tiberinos councillor) with the calculations of Bagnall (1992a) table 2. It has not been noticed that this Tiberinos also occurs in a host of other texts. These confirm what should have been expected on the basis of the size of his holdings: that his councillorship pertains to Alexandria, not to Arsinoe. See *O.Mich.* 1 (1935) 546 (early 4th cent.); *O.Mich.* 3 (1951) 1008 (299); *P.Cair.Isid.* (1960) 5 (299) line 29; 19 (after 313/314) line 12. Cf. also *O.Mich.* 1 (1935) 499 (302) for a Tiberinos former-gymnasiarch; given the date and Karanite provenance this might be the same person as well.
[109] *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 50 (269 A.D) with el Abbadi (1975).
[110] Appianos in Rathbone (1991) 46; Korellios, president of the Hermopolite council in *Stud.Pal.* 20 (1921) passim; Kalpournios Horion and family in Bowman (2001); *P.Stras.* 1 (1912) 10 (268). Cf. *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1444 (248/249) line 15 for a Roman knight not necessarily of Alexandrian status.
[111] Holtheide (1980).

dria, and had others to manage his estates.[112] Many others undoubtedly followed his model.

One of the more interesting consequences of absenteeism is that it created social and economic ties with members of the local elites. They functioned as intermediaries. In some cases, large tracts of lands were leased to members of the local elite. The amounts involved leave little doubt that the latter subleased the properties in smaller parcels to others. In other and perhaps not completely unrelated cases, members of the local elites managed the Alexandrian estates. Thus, we find a president of the local council of Oxyrhynchos for whom it was apparently not beneath his dignity to supervise the local estates of a very wealthy Alexandrian woman. Her estate measured over 1500 arouras.[113] It might be of significance that some of the other examples also concern wealthy women.[114] Nevertheless, there are also cases where the estates belong to men. The estate of the wealthy Alexandrian Appianos was managed by Alypios, probably an Arsinoite magistrate.[115]

The benefits of such arrangements must have been obvious to both parties. By having a local dignitary in charge the interests of the estate would be protected in the best possible way. The supervisor in his turn obtained status from the enormous wealth he was managing and gained direct access to the higher reaches of Alexandrian society.

Networks of patronage could extend further. Sometimes members of the Alexandrian elite acted as local benefactors. It is among their stratum that the few examples of third-century benefactions are found, not among members of the local elites. An honorific inscription was set up by three former gymnasiarchs for the son of a member of the Museion, who probably inherited his Fayumic estate and acted as a local benefactor.[116] Another Alexandrian successfully petitioned the emperor to be allowed to finance ephebic games, establishing a fund of 40,000 drachmas and in one breath he relieved the liturgic burdens

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112 Rathbone (1991).

113 *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3047 (245); *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3048 (246).

114 Cf. *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1634 (222 (?)) where an Aur. Saras, councillor of Oxyrhynchos, assists another wealthy lady in buying mortgaged property from other high-ranking persons. He might be identical with the Saras, councillor, whose name appears in estate accounts (*P.Oxy.* 19 (1948) 2240 (after April 211)); if so, the estate might be hers. Cf. further also *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 50 (255), where a councillor is *epitropos* of an otherwise unknown *ousia Ptolemais*.

115 Rathbone (1991) 58-60.

116 *S.E.G.* 34 (1984) 1559 (217-218) with Rathbone (1991) 56-58.

of the farmers of the villages where he owned land. The capital of the ephebic fund more than doubled in the 25 years following, possibly through another benefaction by a related member of the family.[117]

Many of them were also active locally in another way. In many cases they combined office-holding and councillorship of Alexandria with that of a *metropolis*.[118] From their appearance in council meetings we know that these were not cases of absentee office-holding or cheque-book patronage. The Alexandrian office-holders did not finance local magistracies without actually holding them. They were present in the towns and acted in their official capacities.

The phenomenon of double political activity shows several characteristics. Firstly, it antedates the institution of the councils. Already before 200 there were magistrates who held their offices both locally and in Alexandria.[119] Secondly, there is no evidence for double political activity other than with Alexandria; as a rule, double-office-holding does not occur with more than one *metropolis*.[120] Thirdly, and contrary to what would be expected, Alexandrian offices were normally held first, and only then the local ones.[121] There are only a few known cases of inverted careers.[122]

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[117] *P.Oxy.* 4 (1904) 705 (199-200) and *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2848 V° (225) with Bowman (2001).

[118] The phenomenon has attracted some attention, though not much. Turner (1952) has less to say on the subject than the frequent citation of his article suggests. Bowman (2001) offers a number of pertinent remarks in the context of the study of a single family. See further Bowman (2000) 185-186 and (1971) 26. A brief discussion can also be found in van Groningen (1924) 45-46 n.b.

[119] *I.Alex.* (1994) 39 (172-175) for an Alexandrian who combines Alexandrian magistracies with councillorship in Antinoopolis.

[120] Bowman (1971) 26. Van Groningen (1924) 34 suggested that double office-holding was also possible with other Greek *poleis*, but thus far, no evidence has turned up. Antinoites, who usually had property in the nomes where their families came from, were in fact protected against having to hold magistracies and liturgies elsewhere—though this was not always observed. I know of one exception: Gaios Ioulios Tiron in *P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3498 (274) is former officeholder of Oxyrhynchos and some other place, whose name is unfortunately lost in a lacuna. As this other place is mentioned after Oxyrhynchos, it is unlikely to be Alexandria. See the comments in the ed.pr., where it is emphasised that the situation is 'most unusual'.

[121] This can be inferred from the fact that the Alexandrian titles are mentioned by persons who are local magistrate *in office*, see e.g. *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2723 (3rd cent.), *P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3245 (297).

[122] One example might be offered by a man named Saras, who started as gymnasiarch and councillor of Oxyrhynchos in *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237), but was later described as gymnasiarch and councillor of Alexandria and 'however he is styled' in *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254). At a much later date (probably long after his death), he was described as magistrate (*arxas*) of Alexandria and of Oxyrhynchos in *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296).

It is also clear that the double councillorship and office-holding were not confined to the lower parts of the Alexandrian elite. In fact, we find people with the highest Alexandrian offices active in local politics. There are former eutheniarchs, gymnasiarchs and *hypomnematographoi*. From Oxyrhynchos we know that they formed the highest placed members of the local elite in terms of wealth, in terms of office-holding and in terms of social standing. At the local level, they filled the highest magistracies. In Oxyrhynchos, the presidency in the last quarter of the third century was dominated by Alexandrians.[123]

Another sign of local involvement is even more striking. Many Alexandrians turn out to have had family ties locally. Marriage might occur locally, sons might be active in local politics, and so on. There are numerous examples of families that produced both local and Alexandrian councillors. So, we meet a father who was magistrate and councillor of Alexandria, while his son was former gymnasiarch of Oxyrhynchos.[124]

In itself the existence of a regional elite in third-century Egypt is not very surprising, though as a social group it has hardly been studied. What makes the regional elite of real interest is the close ties its members kept with the local elites. Normal ideas of social mobility therefore do not apply. We have to envisage a regional elite thoroughly intertwined with the local elites. It is not completely clear whether we are dealing with socially mobile locals or geographically mobile Alexandrians.[125] Perhaps this is an academic distinction. At any rate the group cannot be split into two parts.

The group is more diffuse than the local elites. Not only did it lack the same formal demarcation as the local elites had with their councils, the regional elite was also integrated to such an extent with the local elite that clear dividing lines cannot be drawn.

The size of the group is difficult to estimate. In terms of office-holders, it must have consisted of at least 100 members, for each of the about 50 nomes needed one *strategos* and one royal scribe. As there were also Alexandrians that were simultaneously active in local politics, the group must have been larger. At a guess, it will have con-

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[123] This fact has until now not been noticed. Whether it is of social significance remains unclear; if so, it would be the only traceable social change in Roman local politics known to me.

[124] *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3131 (ca 218-225).

[125] See Turner (1952). Drew-Bear (1984) 323 regards them to be redrawing to their own estates.

sisted of a couple of 100 members, distributed over all the towns of Roman Egypt.

CONSEQUENCES

The basis of the elite was formed by the existence of a sizable group of wealthy landowners. Their estates were scattered around the nome in small plots, but they lived in the *metropoleis*. From their midst, the members of the council were recruited.

Membership of the council was restricted. The seat in the council was held for life and conveyed great honor. Processes of selection are not well known, but there can be no doubt that there existed a minimum age for entrance, that only men were admitted, and that these men had to be free-born. Wealth will have been the main criterion for selection.

The requirements for admission to the council are in themselves hardly surprising. But at the same time they formed grounds for exclusion. A comparison with the group of landowners is instructive. At the top of the economic pyramid, all landowners can be assumed to have been of appropriate wealth, and of suitable standing. Nevertheless some were excluded. Perhaps, there might have been some freedmen among the landowners; these might not have been admitted into the council. Other groups are more significant, however. There was a sizable minority of female landowners. Even if we assume a low percentage of 10% female owners, their exclusion from the council was still of some significance. What is more important, the number of landowners who had not reached the minimum age for entrance must have been large. Landholdings were primarily obtained through inheritance. Given the high level of mortality, the number of relatively young landowners must have been high.[126] The council certainly was supposed to represent the interests of the landowning elite, but this did not imply that all had access to it.

To know which parts of the landowners who were formally qualified were actually admitted into the councils we have to know two figures: the minimum amount of property required, and the size of the councils. Neither is known with exactitude. What is worse is that at least one of these and possibly both must have varied according to the

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[126] See for the Roman west Saller (1994) 189-190.

size of the *metropolis*. What is likely is that in the larger towns, Oxyrhynchos, Hermopolis and Arsinoe, council size will have been in the order of 100 members. The minimum amount of land required is unknown but might have been in the order of 100 arouras.

The consequences of these findings can be explored in a simple model, which may be called the '100-model', because (by coincidence) all the assumptions revolve around the figure of 100. Following the model of the Hermopolite distribution of land, we may envisage in the large *metropoleis* an economic pyramid in which about 100 landowners owned 100 arouras and over. If the councils of these *metropoleis* comprised 100 members and the property required to maintain councillor-status was 100 arouras, the obvious consequence would be that all landowners would have to be included in the council to maintain the council at full size. In actual fact, that was not possible, because a substantial minority (ca 10-20) of property owners were women, and an unknown part of the landowners was not illegible because of its age. Even without these obstacles, the fragility of the situation immediately becomes apparent: either the councils had to be decreased in size, or councillors from lower wealth brackets had to be admitted. It would have been very difficult to sustain for a prolonged period a council with sufficient numbers of people of sufficient wealth.

What is also clear is that the degree of differentiation within such a council would be large. Following again the Hermopolite land distribution, it becomes clear that many councillors owned just slightly over 100 arouras. Many of them balanced on the threshold of council membership. To what extent the figures of the Hermopolite distribution form a reliable guide to economic differentiation *within* the council must remain an open question. The figures on which the model is based are all very small, so slight changes would have large repercussions. But if the Hermopolite pattern is anything to go by, over a third of council members would be in the lowest wealth bracket. Their position would have been relatively vulnerable. What is also apparent is that the gap separating this group from the wealthiest members of the council was relatively large. Whereas a large group owned just over 100 arouras, there was also a group of people owning at least five times as much. To an outsider all councillors may have seemed a single group of social peers, but the councillors would in all likelihood have perceived among themselves large differences in economic, and, we may assume, social status.

It is among the segment of the wealthiest landowners that the upwardly mobile members of the regional, Alexandrian, elite should be located. For them, it would have been an obvious choice to aspire higher. Membership of a local council would only to some extent convey the honour that they sought to achieve. Many of their fellow-councillors were no match for them. At the same time, it is easy to see why so many members of the regional elite had all kinds of ties with the elites of the *metropoleis*, economically, socially, even blood ties. They often were present in the *metropoleis* and were politically active. In other cases, members of the local elite managed their estates. They often intermarried locally; their sons and daughters remained tied to the local level, and so on. Networks of dependency and patronage must have formed almost automatically.

How this model applies to the smaller *metropoleis* is difficult to say, but the basic principles can be sketched. In smaller towns either the landowning elite was poorer, or it was smaller, than in larger towns. The larger the council relative to the size of the town, the more the scope for internal differentiation. In a system of proportionately sized councils, the effects were limited. In a system in which councils were of the same size, the scope for internal differentiation was larger. Put differently: if smaller *metropoleis* also had smaller councils, the problems sketched above would be the same, if they had a council of 100 members, the problems would be worse. In that sense both in large and in small towns, the councils were an endangered species.

PART TWO

MOBILITY AND CONTINUITY

PART TWO CHAPTER ONE

CYCICAL MOBILITY

AN HIERARCHICAL WORLD

In Part One of this book a model was presented for analysing the position of the urban elites. It showed perhaps not a stable but certainly an hierarchical world. A relatively large part of the population lived in towns. There existed a hierarchy in the size of the urban populations. Within the urban population the economic differences were very large. High economic differentiation went hand in hand with large social differences. There were urban elites that demarcated their status through membership of the council; these elites were themselves again highly stratified.

There is nothing intrinsically surprising in that picture. The Roman world was, after all, steeply hierarchical. The Roman Empire was a world of cities; from a comparative perspective levels of urbanisation were relatively high. Both economic and social differentiation was high. The distance that separated a senator from a peasant was unbridgeable.

There is no reason to expect that the urban world of third-century Egypt would form an exception to the rest of the Roman Empire. It would have been odd if it had, after two centuries of Roman rule. The fostering of urbanisation, the introduction of full ownership of land and the adoption of Graeco-Roman civic ideology make it inherently plausible that elite formation occurred on the same lines as elsewhere. The process occurred later but was not structurally different.

The question, however, is what such economic and social differentiation implies. Steep hierarchies may suggest the stability of a well-ordered society, with clearly delineated social strata. If social groups led a life separate from each other, the implication is that social mobility from one group to another was limited. Especially at the upper layers of society, access might have been extremely restricted. In consequence the urban elites must have formed closed groups. Sons fol-

lowed in their fathers' footsteps and *de facto* inherited elite membership from their fathers.

Often, this train of arguments has been taken to describe the urban society of the cities that dotted the Roman Empire. The urban elites of the Roman Empire are presented as groups that lived in splendid isolation, at a far remove from the rest of the urban populace. They dominated the local scene for generations, and monopolized the more honourable offices. The elites formed essentially a closed group, to which outsiders had only very limited access. In theory, one could ascend through the acquisition of wealth, but wealth was something which one possessed, not something that was acquired. Respectability could not be bought. According to this theory social mobility was limited, and the occasional wealthy outsider had great difficulty in penetrating the upper ranks of the urban hierarchy.

Although explicit statements are few, similar thoughts seem to exist with regard to the urban elites of Roman Egypt. The elite is taken to form a coterie of important families that managed to stay in power for generations on end. Such ideas are implicitly present in prosopographical research of elite families. Intergenerational continuity is taken for granted, and the task of the researcher is to lay bare the network of familial ties that formed the underpinning of the elite's existence.

Roman Social Mobility

Because Roman elites are often considered to be relatively closed, the question how outsiders could gain access has acquired high importance. Which individuals or groups were best placed to enter the elite? What kinds of barriers were erected to hinder outside intrusion? How many outsiders managed to enter the elite? And did they succeed in one generation, or only indirectly, through the social advance of their children or grandchildren?

For the cities of the Western part of the Roman Empire, especially those of Italy, the possibilities for social mobility have been much discussed. Mobility, so it has been assumed, was limited, but did occur, especially in the case of former slaves. In studying mobility in the cities of the Western part of Roman society, close attention has therefore been paid to freedmen. Since wealth formed the royal road to upward social mobility, financial advancement was thought to be pos-

sible mainly at those moments when freedman entrepreneurship gained access to the capital of their patrons. This could occur when freedmen inherited from their patrons, but other means were also possible. Legal prohibitions, however, hindered quick social advance: wealthy freedmen gained no admission to that ultimate symbol of local respectability, the town councils. Social advancement was difficult, but not completely impossible in the longer run. It was delayed for one generation or more: descendants of freedmen obtained full citizenship, and as full citizens they could and did enter the elite.

Much research has focused on the number of sons of freedmen who entered the councils. Slaves usually had a Greek name (or at least a non-Roman name), which after they obtained freedom was included in their new name. An indirect indication of freedmen intrusion is thus provided by the existence of Greek-sounding names among the elite. However, the interpretation of the data concerning such Greek sounding names is not without difficulties. It is telling that the same body of evidence about the composition of one town council could lead to estimates of the numbers of sons of freedmen varying between 7%-25%.[1]

The research not only focused on establishing percentages, but also on the implications of freedmen intrusion. A number of interpretations is possible. According to the dominant view, freedmen and their descendants quickly conformed to elite norms in order to be accepted. Commercial activities were given up, land was bought. In this view, the importance of the intrusion of freedmen was not large in the longer run: social advancement existed, but renewal occurred without change.[2] At the other end of the spectrum, it has been argued that the permanent intrusion of descendants of freedmen, whether adapting to the new social setting or not, must have given the councils a mercantile ring.[3]

An Oracle Question

As we will see in Part Two Chapter Four, freedmen mobility in third-century Egypt was fairly limited. Although slaves were numerous and

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1 Garnsey (1975) discussing Pleket (1971) and Gordon (1931).
2 Jongman (1988) 275-329.
3 D'Arms (1981), Pleket (1990) 45-46.

manumission was almost universal, there is no evidence that freedmen entered the elite in significant numbers. There is not a single councillor for whom freedman-descent can be established.

The lack of freedmen and their descendants among the elite may suggest that social mobility in Roman Egypt was even more restricted than it was elsewhere in the Roman Empire. However, one may wonder whether outside intrusion forms the best entry to the issue of social mobility. The essence of the problem lies elsewhere, in the assumption that the elite formed a closed group. If this was the case, the elite must have been self-reproducing. In institutional terms, it must have meant that membership of the council was fixed, and that only sons of councillors could gain entry. Only by exception could outsiders intrude.

In order to rephrase the problem, let us begin with a question. The question is an ancient one, not a modern. "Will I become a councillor?" This question, already referred to in the previous chapter, comes from an oracle book, the so-called *Sortes Astrampsychi*.[4] The question whether someone can become a councillor is an innocent question at first sight. And in a way it will remain innocent: its status will not be anything more than that of an illustration. The text *proves* nothing, but what it illustrates is that membership of the local council apparently fell within the reach of the potential client. It was within his social horizon. The fact that it had entered a standardised series of questions suggests it was apparently something that could be asked and that its answer could not be taken for granted. Through its simple presence the question suggests that the possibilities for social mobility were larger than is usually thought.

Cyclical Mobility

The oracle question points to a reality beneath the surface. What will be argued in this part of the book is that beneath the neat structures of local Roman society there existed a hidden layer of cyclical mobility. Social boundaries were permeable because urban elites did not succeed in reproducing themselves in sufficient numbers. Whether members of the elite were succeeded by their sons was in the first place determined by demography. The demographic regime, coupled with a

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[4] *Sortes Astrampsychi* (ed. R. Stewart) question 88.

system of partible inheritance, caused much social fragmentation. Social fragmentation created vacancies, and hence possibilities for advancement. While some families dropped out of the elite, others rose to prominence. Families descended and ascended at a relatively rapid pace. Rates of succession were low, social mobility must therefore have been high. However, the mobility is not to be located where it is usually sought, among freedmen, but among the regular urban population, more specifically among the landowners directly below the elite.

'Low' rates of succession and 'high' levels of social mobility are of course relative concepts, depending on expectations. Here the concepts low and high refer to the supposition that a limited number of families dominated urban life. As we saw, this supposition is often encountered in discussions of urban elites. According to the present argument, this idea needs to be adjusted.

The concept of *cyclical* mobility has been used in a study of the Russian peasantry in the years before and after the Russian revolution.[5] The study showed that beneath the net movement from one peasant stratum to another peasant stratum there existed much stronger currents of individual social mobility. Taken together, such movements cancelled each other out. If net movement from class A to B was, say, 5%, there turned out to be a real movement from A to B of 20% and from B to A of 15%. In the aggregate statistics this real mobility disappeared. For studies of mobility, it is all too important, however.

This type of cyclical mobility is of real relevance for Roman social history, for processes of elite formation, oligarchisation, and social mobility. The problem of social mobility should not be considered from the perspective of those who managed to enter the elite, but from the perspective of the elite as a whole. The 'elitism' of the elite was only notional, and could only be notional. High differentiation did not automatically imply a closing of ranks.

The theory has found its application in Roman history. Pride of place goes to the work of Hopkins and Burton about senatorial rates of reproduction. They argued for a substantial lack of succession among the senatorial elite.[6] More recently, Saller's kinship simula-

[5] Shanin (1972).
[6] Hopkins (1983c).

tions in *Patriarchy, Property and Death* presented a world in which death was pervasive and succession could never be taken for granted.[7]

Thanks to such works, the argument might be known, yet it is little applied. It certainly has not found its way into studies of the elites of Roman Egypt. Occasionally references are made to the effects of high mortality or to effects of the partition of inheritances, but a systematic treatment of the effects is still lacking. It is not my intention to claim with a grand gesture that the model of cyclical mobility applies equally to the local elites of third-century Egypt, and leave it at that. It is not the conclusion that is interesting, but the way it is arrived at, and, equally important, its implications for elite formation. There are three good reasons for applying the argument to the urban elites of third-century Egypt. One has to do with elite formation, one with demography, and one with property transmission.

Demography, Property Transmission, Elites

The possibilities for elites to reproduce themselves are in the first place determined by demography. According to the argument that is presented in this part of the book, rates of succession were rather low because in many cases the number of elite children was too low or too high. Too low a number of children led to extinction, too high to fragmentation of property.

In demography, two approaches are possible, one concerning size, the other concerning structure. In the former the number of persons of a given group and possible growth and decline are studied; in the latter the systemic features of a population: its age structure, family size, age at marriage, rates of fertility and so on. Size has been discussed in the previous chapters. Size, however, can only be understood in terms of structure.

Over the past decades, a revolution has taken place in the study of the structure of ancient demography, exemplified in the works of Hopkins, Saller, Shaw, Parkin, Bagnall and Frier, and Scheidel.[8] In their work, Egypt has played a prominent role. The demography of Roman Egypt can better be studied than anywhere else in the Roman Empire thanks to the survival of census records on papyrus. These al-

[7] Saller (1994).
[8] Scheidel (2001a) for an overview and bibliography.

low a comparison of empirical evidence with demographic models. For this reason, the claims for Egypt have more force than those for other areas of the Roman Empire.

In the model of cyclical mobility, the demographic characteristics of the general population are applied to the elites. The mortality structure of the elites is the same, so it is assumed, as that of the population described by the census. The census only partly includes the third century elites, but in Part Two Chapter Two it will be argued that the chances that the demographic regime of the third-century elite differed substantially from that of the census population are small.

Thanks again to the papyri, the way members of the elite transmitted their property are relatively well-known. In the model for senatorial elites property transmission did not play a large role, and it is here that Egypt can make an important contribution to general discussions of cyclical mobility. True, land registers, wills, marriage contracts, decisions of administrators and petitions concerning inheritances all have their own problems, but the evidence is abundant in comparison to that of other regions of the Roman Empire.

Unsurprisingly, elites transferred their property mainly through inheritance. Partible inheritance was the norm throughout antiquity, and so it was in Egypt. The Egyptian variety was 'radical' in the sense that women in principle had the same rights as men. They had similar rights to inherit property, and similar rights to pass it on. What needs to be established is to what extent elite practices differed from those of the rest of the population. Theoretically the room for manoeuvre was large. However, it will be argued that elite practices conformed closely to the general norms.

As for the issue of succession, the major advantage of Egypt is simply the availability of examples. There are actual examples of elite families that continued for a number of generations, and there exist examples of elite families that disappeared. Contrary to what one might think, however, in the case of Egypt prosopography helps little in establishing *rates* of succession. Given their involvement in municipal administration, it is hardly surprising that the onomastic survival rate of councillors is very high: a large proportion of names is known. The prospects for research therefore look good, but what actually survives is hardly more than names. Of course, it is not difficult to find sons of councillors in the papyri. However, the problem is those that are missing. Did they not exist, or are they simply not at-

tested? The histories of individual families provide flesh to the bare bones of the statistics, but they do not produce figures themselves.

PART TWO CHAPTER TWO

ELITE DEMOGRAPHY

Matters of Life and Death

As in all parts of the Roman world, oracles were frequently consulted in Roman Egypt. One specific type of oracle, which has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the so-called *Sortes Astrampsychi*, was very popular in the third century.[1] It was named after Astrampsychos, a legendary Egyptian sage, and consisted of about 100 questions. For each question 10 answers were given, which were grouped into decades in what seemed to be random manner. Both questions and answers carried numbers, and these were used to navigate through the deliberately complicated structure of the manuscript. After the client had picked the appropriate question, he was asked to choose a number between 1 and 10. This number was added to the number of the question. Next, a table was consulted which provided a new number for each outcome. This new number was the number of the answer, which consequently could be looked up.

The choice of subjects seems random; the *Sortes Astrampsychi* forms an odd collection of everyday problems, fears, and existential problems. Together, the questions form wonderful material to construct what might be called the social horizon of the individual. The questions addressed major concerns: poverty and wealth, risks, death, career opportunities, conflicts. That questions like "Will I become a councillor?" (cited previously), and "Will I become an ambassador?" were also included shows that the *Sortes Astrampsychi* were not the preserve of the rural poor but were consulted by members of the elite as well.[2]

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[1] Frankfurter (1998) 181-184 for explanation, context and further references; the texts were reedited by R. Stewart in 2001.

[2] *Sortes Astrampsychi* (ed. R. Stewart) questions no 88 and 87.

What is striking is that a significant part of the questions concerned demographic life-events. There are questions like: "Is the person abroad alive?" "Am I to recover from my illness?", "Am I to live for a time?" "Am I to have a baby?" "Am I to get the woman I want?" "Am I to be divorced from my wife?"[3] Death, disease, procreation and marriage and divorce were subjects of prime importance.

Just as such questions concerning death, marriage and fertility were important to Roman men and women, they are also important for the historian. For the historian, the perspective is somewhat different of course. It is the demographic regime of a population that is of interest, not the individual experience of demographic life-events.

Demography is of crucial importance for cyclical mobility among the urban elites of third-century Egypt. Mortality, marriage and fertility are of immediate relevance for the issue of reproduction and succession. The aim of this chapter is therefore to describe the demographic regime of the urban elite of Egypt in the third century by analysing the formal characteristics of patterns of mortality, marriage and fertility. Migration, the fourth property that can be subjected to demographic analysis, will be left out of consideration.[4]

As statistically usable material that pertains to the third-century elites is lacking, this aim can only be achieved through an indirect route. Because the demographic regime of the census population of the first two and a half centuries is much better known than that of the third-century urban elites it is better to start the analysis from the formal properties of the demographic regime of the census population. This may seem cumbersome, but the census population is not the worst point of reference.[5] The characteristics of the two populations

[3] *Sortes Astrampsychi* (ed. R. Stewart) questions no 80, 42, 44, 47, 55 and 90.

[4] Its avoidance has been standard practice in ancient demography, for the simple reason that little can be established about it. It is significant that even in the most notable exception, Bagnall and Frier (1994) 160-169, patterns of town-country migration are only inferred on the basis of differences in the age distributions of rural and urban populations. For the difficulties of studying migration, see Scheidel (2001a) 46-48. In the case of the elite population under consideration in this chapter, migration will have consisted mainly of net immigration into Alexandria. Cf. the section on the regional elite in Part One Chapter Four for the complexity of the issues.

[5] One could consider studying elite-like groups within the census population that may form rough approximations of the third-century elites: slave owning families or the members of the gymnasial class. However, both would only constitute vague approximations at best and even if they could be taken to have had demographic characteristics similar to the third-century elites, they would constitute samples far too small to be of any statistical use.

are likely to coincide at least partially, both because the census also included members of the elite of the first two and a half century and because the census covers the first half of the third century. The main question to address is then to what extent the characteristics of both groups coincide. Is it legitimate to apply the demographic characteristics of the census population of Roman Egypt of the first two and a half centuries to the third-century urban elites?

It is useful to discuss at some more length the possibilities and problems of this type of research. Establishing the properties of the demographic regime of the census population is in itself relatively easy, not only because of the high quality of the sources, but also because so much has been written about demography in recent decades.[6] With regard to the demography of Roman Egypt, Bagnall and Frier have set the subject on a new footing with their landmark study of the census declarations. One of the major advances is that they do not confine their study to mortality, but pay full attention to other properties of the demographic regime as well.[7] Scheidel has added a host of other studies, some of them on technical details, others on issues of fundamental importance.[8]

There is also a difficulty, however. In the study of the demography of Roman Egypt evidence and models are intertwined to such an extent that it is almost impossible to untangle the knot. The epistemological relationship between the evidence from the census and demographic models is a complicated one.[9]

Quantitative models, particularly but not only those of mortality patterns, form the backbone of any type of demography, but especially of ancient demography. The reason is that demographic regimes with very high mortality such as those of the ancient world have never been properly documented empirically. Low standards of living are usually no stimulus for efficient administration. Even comparative evidence is largely wanting.

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[6] For an introduction, see Parkin (1992); for an overview of the historiography and agenda for future research see Scheidel (2001a).

[7] Bagnall and Frier (1994), building on Hombert and Préaux (1952) and Hopkins (1980b). See also the additional comments in Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford (1997) 89-113. Cf. Parkin (1992), whose fierce criticism of previous demographic work (not necessarily on Roman Egypt) remains to a large part confined to studies of mortality.

[8] See for the latter category most notably Scheidel (1996a) and Scheidel (2001b).

[9] Scheidel (2001b) 118-180 contains the most sophisticated and penetrating analysis of the methodological problems involved.

Nevertheless, it has to be realised that, unlike some of the other models applied in ancient history, these demographic models are not purely logical constructs, but that they are ultimately rooted in empirical observation. They are based on extrapolations and generalisations from better-known demographic regimes with lower levels of mortality. As these empirical observations are turned into more generalised patterns, the models change from descriptive into normative ones.[10] The resulting models offer stylised demographic patterns that can be used to approximate demographic properties that have not been properly documented. Their legitimacy lies in the recognition that most demographic properties, above all mortality, follow more or less fixed patterns: the shape of curves remains fixed, even though their absolute values differ from population to population. Cultural patterns may shift, medical standards may improve, but biology remains constant.

In principle the generalised demographic models have been designed to repair defective data, but in ancient history they are usually simply used instead of data, because the sources are inadequate.[11] However, it is important to emphasise the obvious point that they can never operate completely independent of empirical observation. After all, choices have to be made. Comparative evidence might help in making decisions, but it is to be kept in mind that similar demographic regimes have never been documented empirically.[12] It is difficult to see on what else more exact choices can be based but on ancient data, defective and impressionistic as these may be. Epitaphs and skeletons may be worthless as evidence for age-specific mortality because patterns of burial and patterns of commemoration depend far too much on cultural value systems,[13] but the uncomfortable truth is that the as-

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[10] For the distinction, see Newell (1988) 117-118.

[11] Parkin (1992) 67-90 for the argument and defence.

[12] See Hopkins (1966/1967) 264, where the polemical tone seems to hide methodological uneasiness: "it seems to me that the burden of proof is firmly on those who wish to assert that the Roman population in general had a lower mortality than other pre-industrial populations with similar technical achievements or towns; they must show that there were present in the Roman Empire factors which could have led to a general diminution of mortality". The problem is that we do not know what populations can be regarded as similar, and that well-documented populations have lower levels of mortality.

[13] See e.g. Parkin (1992) 19: "The material is so plagued with misleading biases and impossible demographic trends that the use of tombstone inscriptions, however selective, is unjustified and potentially fallacious". The argument goes back to Hopkins (1966/1967), see also Hopkins (1987). Despite years of mounting criticism, the

sessment of ancient levels of mortality is certainly based on the general impression that they convey. Thus, the choice of model remains in a general sense governed by the evidence. The obvious corollary is that the better the evidence is, the better the choices can be.

The Evidence from the Census

Because of the relatively high quality of its sources, Roman Egypt plays a key role in making such choices. The situation regarding Roman Egypt is complex, however. The main problem is that the evidence is far too good to ignore, but by far not good enough to be used independently of demographic models. Compared to the rest of the ancient world, the demographic evidence of Roman Egypt has a lot to offer in terms of quantity and diversity. As high mortality regimes such as those of the ancient world almost always escape documentation, the demographic sources of Roman Egypt are of considerable importance for the study of historical demography in general. On the other hand, all the sources also have problems, some of them severe.

This brings us to the evidence of the census. The census data are generally and rightly acknowledged to form the most reliable demographic evidence of the ancient world at large.[14] From the time of Augustus to the middle of the third century, every fourteen years, all heads of households had to declare all persons living in the household, free, freed or slave, male or female, child or adult. As with most population counts in most societies, the census seems to have had no *direct* purpose beyond an enlistment of every living person.[15] Indirectly, however, it paved the way for the collection of poll tax and helped in the registration of specific statuses. To some extent these indirect aims were complementary: status often conferred tax privi-

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problems of determining mortality on the basis of funerary evidence are apparently still not realised by all. See Hoffmann (2000) 146-149 for an uncritical presentation of an age-distribution based on Demotic mummy-labels. In the otherwise interesting study of the skeletal material from Douch, Lichtenberg (1998) 120 remarks laconically that "[l']étude de la longevité ne montre pas de difference sensible par rapport aux populations de la Vallée", by which the census population is meant. With an age distribution and a sex ratio that make no sense for any population, ancient or modern, and an improbable life expectancy at birth of 38 years, one can only wonder what standards of sensibility are employed.

[14] Even, grudgingly it seems, acknowledged by Parkin (1992) 19-21.

[15] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 26-30, cf. Newell (1988) 13.

lege. Declarations mentioned the names of all people in the household, lodgers and slaves included, their age, and their relation to other members of the household. Although more information would certainly have been welcome from a demographic point of view, it is well known that the quality of census data diminishes rapidly with increasing complexity of the questions.[16] By that standard, the census was rudimentary but worked well. Indeed, lack of digit preference in the statement of ages suggests high quality in reportage.[17]

However, notwithstanding its qualities, the census data are not perfect either. At the risk of stating the obvious, it needs to be repeated that all the census data suffer from heavy biases. No matter how sophisticated the methods of analysis, even the census data are bound to remain imperfect.[18] Firstly, the survival of 300 census declarations may seem impressive at first, but these form only a minute fraction of the texts originally produced.[19] Secondly, the sample is not only small, it is also unrepresentative. The distribution pattern follows the pattern of documentary papyri in general. This means that the declarations originate in overwhelming majority from Middle Egypt, are chronologically highly biased towards the second century and stem to a disproportional extent from towns. Thirdly, the possibility of substantial underregistration has not had the attention it deserves. Some legal enactments suggest precisely the type of heavy underregistration one would expect on the basis of comparative evidence.[20] The wide extent

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[16] Newell (1988) 15-16.

[17] Not automatically, though: in itself lack of digit preference might also imply an upward social bias in the sample. Note also that Bagnall and Frier (1994) frequently mention the possibility of age *shifting* around age 14. For digit preference and age rounding, the most thorough discussion is that of Scheidel (1996a) 53-91. Scheidel argues that age rounding is dependent on context: the more official the text, the more precise the recording. However, social background might also have played a role: note that all his examples of a high incidence of age rounding originate from a village context.

[18] Statements in Bagnall and Frier (1994) about the statistical significance of particular findings should therefore be taken with a grain of salt: they only have meaning within the data set. For all its sophistication, their rigorous empiricism remains in that sense (though in that sense only) pseudo-scientific.

[19] Assuming (for sake of easy calculation) a constant population of 5 million with 5 persons declared in each declaration, 18 censuses produce 18 million declarations, of which then 0.002% survives. The actual figure of texts once circulating must have been much higher, as many of the surviving declarations are copies. Not even a major new find—cf. *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) (91/92?)—is likely to change such an order of magnitude.

[20] *B.G.U.* 5 (1919) 1210 (after 149) = *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* no. 58-63, mentioning registrations that occurred years after the fact, or not at all (though note that

of illiteracy and the lack of knowledge of Greek in more backward rural areas would certainly not have facilitated registration. Lastly, the dynamics of census taking might have differed between villages and towns. Put crudely, for families in the cities there would have existed positive incentives to register. For them, being registered was a requirement to obtain access to tax privileges. In villages, such incentives would be absent, or negative: the road from registration to poll tax was a short one indeed.[21] Even in modern censuses cooperation of the population is thought to be of crucial importance to ensure complete coverage.[22] In the case of Roman Egypt, there is a real possibility that registration biases differed *between* the rural and the urban samples.

Thus, even our best evidence is to some extent defective. For that reason alone it is impossible to write a demographic history of the ancient world without taking recourse to demographic models. Models are needed to judge whether the patterns produced by the ancient data are realistic. On the other hand, sources are needed to choose the models and to refine the rather general patterns they display. Because neither is perfect, we end up with a difficult balancing act between evidence and model. The models are generalised approximations, the data from the census not always reliable. The one can only be interpreted with the help of the other. Fit between the one and the other offers comfort only, but does not constitute proof.[23]

The question to what extent the demographic regime of the urban elite differed from the rest of the population is not free from problems either. It more or less revives the old quest for differential demography: do specific social groups have specific demographic characteristics?[24] Once popular in studies of class bias in mortality patterns,[25] this

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registration always took place *after* the year the census was declared to take place).

[21] This is indirectly corroborated by Bagnall and Frier's finding that in villages registration occurred within the span of a couple of days, which suggests a census committee invading villages, while in cities registrations occurred throughout the year, suggestive of more voluntarily forms of registration. Bagnall and Frier (1994) 16-18. Note also the comments on the differences in sex-ratio, with concealment of boys in villages but not in the cities, idem 93, cf. 152-153.

[22] Hollingsworth (1969) 27.

[23] Bagnall and Frier (1994) suggested the census data could be used to prove the correctness of the demographic models; this was rightly criticised by Scheidel (2001b) 118-166. At the other side of the spectrum between deductionism and empiricism Parkin (1992) was by no means the only one to present the issue as a choice *between* evidence and model, with a predictable outcome in favour of the latter.

[24] More or less, because for differential demography proper one would have to

type of research has now fallen in disrepute. The problem is not that the question is misguided. Indeed, many types of demographic differences *may* have existed between different social groups, though room for manoeuvre was not infinite. However, substantiation of such differences is very difficult.

Though there is a significant possibility that differences existed, there is hardly ever unequivocal *evidence* for it. The source material from the ancient world is simply inadequate. As all demographic data samples are already very small and unrepresentative of the underlying population, any further break-down into smaller groups invariably suffers from irregularities of small sample size: small differences in the figures may produce hugely different outcomes.[26] To date, the best evidence for differential demography in the ancient world is provided by Bagnall and Frier's distinction in the census declarations between villages and towns, but even this distinction seems to have validity mainly with respect to household typology.[27]

Ironically, the problems pertaining to small sample size are especially acute in the case of elites, as this group comprises by definition a small number of people. In the case of the third-century urban elite itself, it should be explicitly stated that there are no sources at all that lend themselves to *quantitative* demographic analysis. The bulk of the circa 300 surviving census declarations precedes the general introduction of town councils. Among the census declarations surviving from the third century there is only one declaration of a councillor:

> To the poll-tax collectors of Ision Panga, from Aurelios Aniketos son of Ploutarchos, former magistrate in charge of the conveyance of oxen, councillor of the city of the Oxyrhynchites.
>
> In accordance with the orders issued by Aurelios Basileus, former prefect, I register for the house-by-house census of the past first year of our lords Marci Julii Philippi Caesares the quar-

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compare the third-century elites with the *third-century* population, not with the census population. But as was already stated, the two partially overlap.

[25] See for example Boyaval (1977).

[26] As Parkin (1992) 12-13 pointed out in the case of epitaphs.

[27] Bagnall and Frier (1994); though the later published urban register *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) (91/92?) does not fit in as neatly as one would wish. Possibilities for chronological comparison of the urban-rural dichotomy will become available with the publication of a study of Ptolemaic data, promised in a series of articles by W. Clarysse and D. Thompson, see e.g. Thompson (1997). The receipts seem to show substantial differences in household typology between Greeks and Egyptians. These differences may have found their way into the urban-rural distinction of the Roman period.

> ter share of vacant lots belonging to me in the village of Ision Panga, in the eastern parts of the village, by survey …, formerly (belonging to) Berenikianos alias S…, surnamed Eudaimon, son of Diogenes, his mother being Eudaimonis, from the same city and itself formerly the property of his father, and his grandfather Horion alias Berenikianos, in which there is a dovecote and other appurtenances. And I swear the oath customary to the Romans not to have lied. Year two of Imperator Caesar Marcus Julius Philippus Pius Felix and Marcus Julius Philippus the most valiant and noble Caesar, augusti, Pharmouthi 10. I, Aurelios Aniketos son of Ploutarchos have submitted the declaration and sworn the oath.[28]

A single declaration is surely not a good basis for statistics, even if Aurelios Aniketos had declared a family instead of a 'dovecote and other appurtenances'. Moreover, in other texts originating in elite circles, very few ages are given. As reliable series of ages are a precondition for demographic analysis, prospects for the study of elite demography do not look good.

Still, the task is not completely hopeless. In the first place, there are many impressions and examples from elite families that can be culled from the sources. These have no statistical value, but they provide a way to determine in a more general sense whether there are radical divergences between the elites and the census population. In the second place, on the basis of more general considerations about the behaviour of the third-century elites, arguments can be formulated about the possible direction that divergences might take. We might not know whether such divergences actually occurred in reality, but we can nevertheless explore their effects.

Thus, in the case of the third-century elites, the research can only be indirect, by comparison and analogy. Arguments can only be made in the form of probabilities, and in the broadest of terms. It is possibilities we are looking for, not facts.

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[28] *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3565 (245) lines 1-39 (= Bagnall and Frier (1994) 243-Ox-3) (transl. ed., with minor adaptations). Statements in different hands concerning the registration of the document follow.

MORTALITY

Mortality is crucial for the other properties of the demographic regime. Fortunately, it is also the easiest to model.[29] It therefore forms the obvious starting point for an analysis of the demographic regime of the urban elites.

Mortality can be described and analysed in more than one way, but ancient historians usually confine themselves to model life tables.[30] These describe the age distribution and age specific chances of dying for a cohort of births. They come in different types, with different curves and levels of mortality and with different rates of growth. They are designated by their type of mortality curve and their level of mortality.

In the case of the Roman world, the choice of table is relatively uncontroversial. There is wide consensus about levels of Roman mortality. It is generally agreed that they were very high, in the order of a life expectancy at birth between 20 and 30 years, with a preference for the lower end of that range.[31] The model that is most employed to describe and analyse such a high level is that of Coale and Demeny West level 3, with a life expectancy at birth of 25 years.[32] Such a model suggests extraordinary high levels of mortality in the years immediately after birth, and lower, though certainly not low, levels of mortality in later ages.

As was already pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, there is no way to judge the quality of the model on an empirical basis. So, it has recently been pointed out that the extremely high infant mortality predicted by models like model West level 3 is problematic.[33] Examples have been adduced from other historical societies of high mortality regimes where a somewhat less ferocious level of infant mortality was compensated by higher adult mortality.[34] Such examples in themselves prove little about Roman mortality curves, but

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29 Newell (1988) 5.

30 A very useful explanation of the workings of model life tables for ancient historians can be found in Parkin (1992) 75-90; Sallares (1991) is a lone dissenter.

31 The classic statement is Hopkins (1966/1967).

32 Coale, Demeny and Vaughan (1983^2); occasionally model South is employed. To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever tried to apply the alternative set of tables produced by the U.N. in 1982 (not to be confused with the outdated 1966 ones—see Newell (1988) 139-140 for a description) to the Roman demographic regime.

33 Scheidel (2001a) 21-24; Frier (2001) 145-146.

34 Scheidel (2001b) 123-142.

they do suggest that the model life tables currently in use are not the alpha and omega of modelling in Roman demography.[35] However, further refinements and adaptations are unlikely to alter our perceptions of the character of Roman mortality fundamentally.

The quality of the model cannot be tested empirically, but in the case of Roman Egypt the *choice* of a life table can be made in an empirical way, on the basis of the census declarations. In their study of these declarations, Bagnall and Frier arrived for women at a life table which was most closely approximated by model West level 2, for men at level 4, both under conditions of slight growth.[36] Although their calculations are based on implausibly high levels of urbanisation[37] and exclusive instead of inclusive age reckoning,[38] there is no reason to doubt the general validity of their results.

At any rate, the levels 2 and 4 found by Bagnall and Frier hover neatly around the level 3 imputed for the Roman world at large. Put differently, their analysis shows a relatively close fit between evidence and model. What this implies is a different matter: the difficult relation between evidence and model should be kept in mind. As already stated, the evidence of the census is not so good that it constitutes proof that it is legitimate to apply the model life tables to the ancient world. The close fit is comforting, but does not prove that the models are right. What the census documents do show without much doubt is that mortality was at the low end of the spectrum of possibilities.

Did elite levels of mortality differ from those of the census population? Before turning to Egypt, it might be helpful to take a brief look at other elites elsewhere in the Roman world. Some scholars have assumed that members of the imperial aristocracy had a higher life expectancy. Hopkins and Burton estimated a life expectancy at birth of 30 to 32.5 years for senators.[39] This was followed by Saller, who used

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[35] Scheidel (2001c).

[36] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 75-110; Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford (1997) 99-104.

[37] See Part One Chapter One. Bagnall and Frier's weighing of urban and rural declarations is even on a high estimate of levels of urbanisation in need of correction; at present village declarations are undervalued.

[38] Kruit (1998), showing that inclusive counting was in use in declarations of birth. As census declarations and birth declarations were closely related it seems improbable that two systems of age reckoning were simultaneously employed. This means all recorded ages of the census declarations have to be adjusted by minus 1 year. Such a recalculation would lead to a somewhat different age distribution, especially if analysed by age groups.

[39] Hopkins (1983c) 147-148.

model West level 6 with a similar life expectancy at birth as the upper limit of elite mortality.[40] Frier, while stressing that room for demographic differences should be primarily located in fertility, not in mortality, nevertheless considered the possibility that elite mortality was lower than among the rest of the population a real one.[41] Duncan-Jones claimed that the membership catalogue of the council of Canusium, a small city in Southern Italy, represented a regime of significantly lower mortality.[42]

However, three case studies, all by Scheidel, point in the opposite direction. No lower levels of mortality can be found among the council of Canusium, among senators, or among emperors. In the case of the councillors of Canusium, Duncan-Jones' claim turns out to be based on wrong arguments. The technical details are of no concern here, but if anything can be shown, levels of mortality were probably as high as those of the rest of the population.[43] The same sort of life expectancy is obtained in the case of senators, as estimated on the basis of the annual number of entrants and the size of the senate.[44] Similar results are obtained from the empirical evidence of Roman emperors. The life expectancy of the somewhat amusing category of emperors who died from natural causes turns out to have been almost exactly the same as that of the people attested in the Egyptian census records: the (implied) life expectancy at birth is 26.3 years, the best fit is with model West level 4.[45] Even in the best of circumstances, the grim reaper reaped at a steady pace.

What, then, of elite mortality in Roman Egypt? The impression obtained from the sources is that the mortality of the urban elites is similar to that of the census population. As far as our evidence allows us to see, radical divergences are absent. Death could come early, and unexpected, and it was always around.

As always in historical demography, we know little of infant mortality. Even among the census declarations of the general population, children are so underrepresented that infant mortality can only be reconstructed from mortality tables. It is therefore hardly surprising that

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40 Saller (1994) 45, though with a preference for a higher level of mortality.

41 Frier (2001) 145.

42 Duncan-Jones (1990) 93-96.

43 Scheidel (1999) 263-266, in a critique of Duncan-Jones (1990) 93-96 and elaborating on Jongman (1988) 275-329.

44 Scheidel (1999) 258-263, elaborating on Hopkins (1983c) 147-148.

45 Scheidel (1999) 254-258. Life expectancy at birth is *implied* because age at death is compared with the age at which someone became emperor.

impressions of infant mortality among the elite are very hard to obtain. It should be noted, however, that the silence is sometimes taken to be significant. The lack of sources might be explained by a lack of empathy and emotional investment. Infant mortality was so high that the death of new-borns hardly generated comments.[46]

Only very occasionally do we get glimpses. It might be telling that registrations of births occurred often years after the fact.[47] The survival of children past the first years was apparently not to be taken for granted. Further, some children in Roman Egypt had names based on *kopros*, the Greek word for dung. It used to be thought that these were used for foundlings taken from the dung-heap and brought up as slaves. More likely, *kopros*-names referred to difficulties at birth, or to cases where previous children had died in infancy. Their use would reflect uncertainty as to whether the newborn child would survive.[48] For what it is worth, members of the elite also had their fair share of Kopros-names. So, we find a former *agoranomos* called Aurelios Kopres in Karanis in 252, or a former gymnasiarch with a similar name in Leontopolis in 291.[49]

Once past the first crucial years, the young receive somewhat more attention in commemoration. A gymnasiarch erects an epitaph with a short inscription for his daughter:

> No tomb ever held any woman more excellent than this one for birth, discretion and beauty, whose father, Arion, was a wise (?) man and a gymnasiarch. But she left happy life, young Didyme.[50]

Occasionally in elite circles letters of condolence were sent when children died. One was sent to a father and son of a well-known fam-

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[46] This is a crude summary of a complicated issue. For sophisticated analysis of the relation between affection felt for children and high infant mortality, see the dispersed comments in Bradley (1991), e.g. at 140.

[47] See *P.Bingen* (2000) 105 (201/202) for an example, discussion and further references. The registrations are not confined to elite families but have an elitist bias; there is a connection between registration and entrance into the metropolite and gymnasial class. An exception is formed by Antinoopolis, where there existed a legal requirement to register children within 30 days. For a third-century elite example, see *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 2 (247/248).

[48] Explanation in Hobson (1989), building on Pomeroy (1986); repeated by O. Masson, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 112 (1996) 150.

[49] *O.Mich.* 1 (1935) 156 (252); *P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2136 (291), both taken from the list in Pomeroy (1986). The fact that such names were used in elite circles is precisely the reason why the old explanation had to be discarded.

[50] *I.Metr.* (1969) 91 (later Roman period) (transl. partially based on that of R. Lattimore cited in the ed.). 'Wise man' depends on a conjecture: σ(ο)φός.

ily of *strategoi*. It concerned the death of a son and brother.[51] Another, more elaborate one, was written by a man named Eudaimon to Hermodoros, an *exegetes* of Alexandria, and, through him, to his wife (referred to as 'our sister'):

> Eudaimon to Hermodoros, my lord brother, greetings.
>
> By your health, if the duties that I have been assigned were not so numerous and so important as to be inexorable, I would have left everything and rushed to you myself to pay my respects to you, and to talk to you, and especially to our sister about the human fate which has befallen (your?) daughter. For I know that you, being conscious of your human condition and one who has had the experience of many things, will be able to master yourself, and I beg you also to tell (our?) sister the necessary things about that. For none of those who are born at all is immortal. Blessed is she who has escaped this wretched and toilsome life before its disasters arrived. But it is necessary that (our?) sister, even though she is in such a sad(?) condition, nevertheless has the benefit of her nearest and dearest. I beg you, brother, if you have ever helped those in difficulties, now is the time.
>
> To Hermodoros, *exegetes* of Alexandria, from Eudaimon, *speculator*, his brother.[52]

Also later in life, death still came regularly. When a list of young victors in annual games of three past decades was compiled, already 7 out of 74 victors were marked as deceased.[53] A trainer at the gymnasium, deceased at 32, receives elaborate verse.[54] In a family of magistrates and councillors, we find a councillor deceased before age 40.[55] We find a wealthy testator whose mother was still alive while his sons were still minor (below 25); in all likelihood he was relatively young,

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[51] *P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1248 (after 235) with Chapa (1998) nr 6 and Moioli (1987) for a recent discussion of the family. There was at least another sister. Assuming normal patterns of paternity, the brother who was addressed must at least have been around 20. He is attested as councillor in 244, implying he was then at least 25. Further, he has a daughter acting without a *curator* implying (for which see below) she is above 25 in 260/1, a son attested as councillor in 265, and another son who is a below 25 in the same year. He therefore must have become father at the latest in 235.

[52] *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13946 (3rd- 4th cent.) (transl. with of minor adaptations of Chapa (1998) nr. 8, who also provides a copious commentary).

[53] *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2338 (early 4th cent., cf. *B.L.* 10 to *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3787). The figures cannot be statistically employed: ages are only haphazardly given in the text, the victors do not form a single demographic cohort and the exact date of the text (and hence the time-span covered since the victory) is unknown.

[54] *I.Herm.* (1999) 80 (late 2nd-early 3rd cent.), for a παιδοτρίβης.

[55] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) Following the editors interpretation of lines 9-10, the deceased is likely to have been younger than the eldest brother who is about 40 at the moment of writing, because he is mentioned after him.

in his forties perhaps.[56] We see a dowry being returned because a husband died. He must have died at relatively young age: he had one minor son only and was outlived by his wife's parents.[57] We find a councillor paying taxes together with his unnamed grandson—had the councillor's son died?[58]

Some men died unexpectedly, for example while serving in office. An *exegetes* in office died at age 55, so his mummy label tells us.[59] A notification to serve in the *exegeteia* to the heirs of an *exegetes* implies the latter died during his term of office.[60] A man died in the function of royal scribe, leaving one minor son as heir.[61] We see heirs paying the entrance fee of a deceased councillor; presumably, the latter died shortly after being admitted into the council.[62] Conversely, illness provided an excuse to avoid nomination. "For I have long been ill and have a cough in my lung", a president tried to avoid his renomination in a meeting of the council.[63]

Similar levels of mortality seem to have applied to women. We find an elite woman drawing up her will before age 26.[64] The marriage of an Alexandrian owner of a large estate in the Fayum is attested in his archive for a period of eight years only, shortly after which his wife must have died.[65] Another woman left behind two living daughters, still minors, as we learn from a declaration of her husband:

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[56] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.). This is a draft, so it is not certain whether the testator actually died.

[57] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261).

[58] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1522 (after 222): "Sept. Alexandros, councillor, and his grandson", with "and his grandson" written above the line, as an afterthought.

[59] *S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 11993 (late 3rd-early 4th cent.); note that ἔναρχος, 'in office', was first written, then cancelled, then added in the right place. Apparently it was important.

[60] *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3930 (290). It is not clear from the commentary whether the editors realise that this is the case and that the heirs are appointed *because* they are the heirs; *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) does not form a parallel. It is telling that the deceased is called '*exegetes*', not 'former *exegetes*' (and contrary to what is a fairly regular practice, no abbreviation is used that could be resolved either way): he is as it were still in office, even when dead.

[61] *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.). The son is himself a gymnasiarch, so probably he was already in his teens.

[62] *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233); also suggested by the fact that his career reached no further than *agoranomos*.

[63] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1414 (271/272) line 26.

[64] *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 38 (bef. ca 260, cf. *P.Princ.* 3 (1942) 174); whether she actually died is unknown. The presence of a *curator* implies she is 25 or younger.

[65] Rathbone (1991) 44-53: the marriage is attested 231-239.

> In the third year of the emperor Caesar Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus Pius Felix Augustus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus and Gaius Julius Verus Maximus Germanicus Maximus Dacicus Maximus Sarmaticus Maximus the most sacred Caesar Augustus son of Augustus, Epeiph 12, in the city of the Oxyrhynchites. Markos Aurelios Saras, ex-gymnasiarch and councillor of the city of Oxyrhynchites, son of Markos Aurelios Diogenes-Heliodoros, ex-eutheniarch and councillor of the most illustrious city of the Alexandrians and however he is styled, called to witness the persons about to seal the present declaration that on this day at about the third hour to the loss of our hopes Aurelia Apollonia daughter of Markos Aurelilos Apollonios son of Demetrios-Psammis and however he is styled, ex-gymnasiarch and councillor of the city of Oxyrhynchos, his wife and the mother of their daughters Aurelia Stratonike-Sosipatra and Aurelia Apollonia-Dieus, who are minors, died intestate …[66]

The husband, Saras, probably survived her for at least another seventeen years.[67]

There is however no evidence that members of the elite reached particularly high ages as compared to the census population. If there had been, the next question would be whether the evidence would be trustworthy, for it is well known that sometimes improbably high ages are reported for the socially respected. Old age seems to have started relatively early. The youngest attested applicant to the *gerousia*, an elitist institution for which the primary qualification for entrance was old age, was 53.[68] Members of the local council held their councillorship for life (in contrast to magistracies, for which maximum ages existed),[69] yet the oldest attested councillor is only 61.[70] Higher or even similar ages are rare to find.[71] We find a councillor who is a grandfa-

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[66] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237) lines 16-29 (transl. ed., with minor adaptations). This is a bilingual document; the part cited is in Greek. The text is preceded by a declaration of inheritance in Latin and concluded by signatures of witnesses in Greek and of a notary in Latin.

[67] *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254), assuming that the present tense in 'however he is styled' implies he is still living.

[68] *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3100 (225).

[69] As least to the extent to which magistracies were regarded as compulsory services; cf. Lewis (1997^2) 72-73.

[70] *P.Lond.* 2 (1898) 348, col. 1 (203). There are admittedly very few ages of councillors preserved.

[71] *S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 11993 (late 3rd-early 4th cent.) is a mummy-label of an *exegetes* dying in office at age 55. *S.B.* 1 (1913-1915) 792 (2nd-3rd cent.) is another one of a gymnasiarch dead at 61 years and 6 months. *S.B.* 1 (1913-1915) 3974 (Roman

ther, but with the wide variety in patterns of paternity this may mean anything or nothing.[72] One of the daughters in the declaration cited above, Aurelia Apollonia-Dieus, became relatively old; she is found back in another text, by then, she must have been somewhere between 60 and 73.[73] Another daughter of a deceased Alexandrian councillor is found leasing out land when she was between 53 and 58 years old.[74]

Reconstructed careers of councillors and magistrates remain short. They usually span a number of years, not decades. Only in very few cases can longer careers be reconstructed. One councillor may be attested until at least age 50, but this depends on assumptions that remain unsubstantiated.[75] This might tell more about career structures and the limits of prosopography[76] than about life expectancy, but at any rate the short careers cannot be used to argue for a significantly lower level of mortality.[77]

Such impressions add flesh to the bare bones of mortality statistics, but they are, of course, imprecise. The evidence suggests the absence of radical divergences with the mortality of the rest of the population, but whether this is correct can only be determined by analogy and comparison.[78]

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period) is an epitaph of a Leontopolite former gymnasiarch and *exegetes* deceased at 66. The eldest son of a gymnasiarch and councillor is 40 when *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) is written; it is not known how much time had elapsed between the father's death and the drawing of the document, but it seems to be short. If so, patterns of marriage and paternity suggest that the father might have reached at least 60.

72 *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1522 (after 222): Sept. Alexandros, councillor, and his grandson.

73 Aur. Apollonia-Dieus is a minor in the just cited declaration *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237); in *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296) she writes a petition. See also *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254).

74 *P.Oxy.* 61 (1995) 4121 (289/290) 1-4n.

75 Aur. Demetrianos s. of Ploution *might* have been councillor (and hence 25 or older) in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1562 (279-282) and *might* be the same person as the namesake in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1542 (307).

76 Note that identifications often depend on chronological probability: the longer the period between two attestations of name-sakes, the greater the reluctance to consider them the same person.

77 A relatively long career can be reconstructed for Aurelios Spartiates-Chairemon. He is attested as councillor in 244 and hence must have been at least 25 at that moment. He had a daughter who must have been born before 235 (she is above minority in 260/261) With normal patterns of paternity, this suggests he himself must have been born before ca 215 or so. He probably died between 261 and 265 and thus was at least 46 years old. See Moioli (1987) for the family. Note that even in this comparatively well documented case, the exact length of his life cannot be determined.

78 For what follows, I am also indebted to an unpublished paper of Arjan Zuiderhoek of Groningen University in the Netherlands on senatorial mortality, read at the European Social Science History Conference at The Hague, 2002.

In modern societies, especially the more stratified ones, a direct relation appears to exist between mortality and wealth. The higher the income, the higher the chance of survival into old age. Levels of elite mortality would be significantly below those of the ordinary population. It may seem attractive to apply such a model to the past as well. After all, many historical societies combine high levels of mortality with high levels of economic differentiation. Nevertheless, in pre-industrial societies such a relationship is much less direct, if not completely absent. The reason is that two factors compete with each other.

There can be no doubt that the society of Roman Egypt in the third century was highly stratified. As was sketched in Part One Chapter Three, huge differences existed between the propertied classes and the rest of the population. Undoubtedly, general standards of living of the elite were much better than those of the rest of the population: members of the elite ate better food, in larger quantities and of higher caloric value. They lived in more comfortable houses, had better access to medical service, had to do less physical labour and had much less distress in times of scarcity. In short, general levels of well-being were higher. It seems attractive to assume that this had a positive influence on elite levels of mortality.

However, the question is how much. Given prevailing standards of medical practice, access to medical services was not necessarily a benefit. More importantly, the high levels of mortality such as occurred in Roman Egypt are generally thought to be caused by contagious diseases. This is indirectly reflected in seasonal fluctuations in levels of mortality.[79] The spread of such diseases usually occurred independent of standards of living, and hence, independent of class.[80] Instead, density of habitation formed the prime factor in their diffusion.

Urban environments were by definition the most densely populated areas. The lack of hygiene will certainly have facilitated transmittance of disease. It is therefore likely that in Roman Egypt levels of mortal-

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[79] See Scheidel (2001b) 1-117, replacing previous work on the subject. There are too few months of death of members of the elite known to constitute something that can even remotely considered to be a reliable sample. *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276): Epeiph ≈ July (the will is written in Pauni ≈ June); *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237): Epeiph ≈ July; *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348 (224): Thoth ≈ September (the will is written in Epeiph ≈ July); cf. also *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3930 (290): prob. shortly before Pharmouthi ≈ April.

[80] Livi-Bacci (1991), based on evidence from early-modern Europe, is fundamental. See also Johansson (1994) for a vehement attack on the theory that levels of nutrition determine mortality.

ity were higher in cities than in the countryside. On comparative grounds, it is likely that cities formed demographic black holes. They must have been net consumers of people, with an excess of deaths over births.[81]

Now it is important to remember the obvious fact that the elite was an *urban* elite. Its members lived a great deal of their time in their towns. Magistrates would come into contact with people from all walks of life. Members of the elite owned houses in villages, sometimes, but there are no cases where permanent or semi-permanent rural residence is even remotely likely.[82] What is more, house registers show that their houses were scattered among those of the rest of the urban population.[83] Status will therefore have offered little protection against the spread of disease.[84]

It seems likely that both factors compensated each other: better living standards were offset by living in a densely populated environment. It can therefore be asserted with a relatively large degree of certainty that it is unlikely that elite mortality was radically different from the census population, no matter how high elite standards of living were. The capacity of members of the elite to die should therefore not be underestimated.

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[81] For the theory of population sinks applied to Roman Italy, see Jongman (1990), (2003). There can be little doubt that the theory applied to the extremely large cities of the Roman Empire, but the problem is to what extent it also applied to the much smaller other cities: would excess mortality still be significant? It is unfortunate that Bagnall and Frier (1994) do not discuss the possibility in greater detail. The differences in the urban and rural age distributions of the census data could be explained by three not mutually exclusive factors: differences in mortality, differences in growth, and patterns of migration. See further Scheidel (2001b) 144-162.

[82] For a contemporary exception from outside Egypt, see *S.B.* 22 (2001) 15498-15499 (252-256), where a Syrian councillor explicitly states to live in a village: παρὰ Αὐρηλίου Αβιδσαυτα Αβιδιερδου βουλευτοῦ Νεοπολείτου οἰκῶν ἐν Βηθφουρεạ κώμῃ, and petitions against his συνκωμήτης.

[83] *P.Berl.Bork.* (1975) (early 4th cent.) shows magistrates living dispersed in Panopolis; *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235) shows some slight clustering in Oxyrhynchos, but not much. Cf. Alston (2002) 153-157, who argues for elite residence "in tight knots" dispersed over town. Individual examples of houses owned by members of the elite at Oxyrhynchos include *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 911 (233 or 265); *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1284 (250); *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1562 (279-282); *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1697 (242); *P.Ups.Frid.* (1981) 6 (273) (rented out); *P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4438 (252); *P.Turner* (1981) 42 (3rd cent., after 212); cf. *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1693 (bef. 273 or 279).

[84] Somewhat ironically, the empty houses in the previously cited house register *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235) are sometimes taken to represent the situation after an epidemic. If so, cause and effect are simultaneously on display.

Marriage

Next, marriage. First, patterns of marriage among the Egyptian census population will be discussed, then, briefly, the possible differences of senatorial marriage patterns, and, lastly, the marital patterns of the third-century urban elites of Egypt.

Age at marriage forms a natural starting point. In the census population, women started to marry from age 12 onwards, while men started to marry later, from age 18 onwards. Most people married at a somewhat later age. In the case of women, there is a very steep rise in the proportions married, until at age 20 around three-fifths of all women are married. Around age 30 all women appear to have married once. The proportion of married men rose at a slower rate than that of women. At age 25 half of all men were married; thereafter the proportion continued to rise, at a much slower pace, until in the early 50s all males were married or had been previously married.[85] All persons, in other words, married at some point: marriage was universal.

The fact that women and men started to marry from different ages onwards resulted in a substantial age gap between the spouses. The man would normally be older than his wife; the mean age gap in the census declarations between husband and wife is 7.7 years.[86] The extent of the gap is age and gender specific. In the case of women, the gap closes with age; in case of men, the gap increases. This rather counterintuitive pattern is produced by the marriage of some young girls to relatively old men. As these die, the women usually do not remarry.[87]

Marriage was universal, but not all people remained married during the whole of their adult life. Age gaps resulted in a difference in the likelihood of death. Divorce was possible and did occur, but given the high levels of mortality the death of one of the spouses would in all probability form a much more common termination of marriage. A particular feature of the Egyptian demographic regime was that female remarriage occurred seldom. The fact that most women re-

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[85] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 111-118 with Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford (1997) 105-107. The directly attested ages of marriage need to be adjusted by minus 1, cf. Kruit (1998), but indirectly calculated figures, which are based on the subtraction of child's age from the parent's age, should not.

[86] Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford (1997) 106, cf. Bagnall and Frier (1994) 118. There is much dispersion; in most cases the husband is older, but in a minority of cases, it is the woman who is older.

[87] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 118-121.

mained widows if their husband died is of real importance demographically, because it formed an important check on levels of fertility. By contrast, men often sought new young brides if their wives died, thereby competing with younger men on the marriage market.

Lastly, a substantial part of marriages in Roman Egypt was concluded between full brothers and sisters. Such marriages show some deviations from normal marriage patterns. They were invariably first marriages, and show usually a relatively low age at marriage and a small age gap between the spouses.[88]

Brother-sister marriage is a highly controversial issue and calls for some comment. While there is a tiny bit of Ptolemaic evidence, brother-sister marriage is fully attested in the first two centuries of the Roman period only. In census-records, and some other texts as well, people registered their marriages openly as brother-sister marriage, using phrases like 'my wife and sister from the same father and mother' that leave no room for ambiguity.

Thus, we owe our knowledge of existence of brother-sister marriage to the Roman census, but we should be precise. The absence of clear evidence of previous or later brother-sister marriage does not preclude its occurrence.[89] At any rate, the hypothesis ventured by Shaw that Greek colonists introduced the practice at the beginning of the Roman period is inherently implausible. After three centuries of Greek presence it would be hard to find a rationale for the sudden adoption of a non-existent custom by a people whose own culture was so strongly opposed to incestuous marriage.[90]

In the first two centuries, brother-sister marriage was widespread and pervasive, though the extent may have differed in time or place.[91]

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[88] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 127-133, though less explicit than stated here.

[89] Shaw (1992) confuses attestation of brother-sister marriages with actual occurrence. As was pointed out by Hopkins (1980b), the crucial point is not that brother-sister marriage did not exist before the Roman census started, but that we do not *know* if it did.

[90] Contra Shaw (1992). Despite its obvious flaws, Shaw's thesis has been taken remarkably seriously in some quarters, e.g. Montserrat (1996) 90. It should be added that the supposed evidence for ethnic segregation on which the thesis is based stems from the marital rulings of the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*. As these rulings concern Greek citizens (the *astoi*) and all others (the *Aigyptioi*) they have no bearing whatsoever on the relation between the Hellenised groups of the *metropoleis* and the rest of the population of the nomes—for the *Gnomon* they were both *Aigyptioi*.

[91] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 130, also in Bagnall, Frier and Rutherford (1997) 108 posit a spread from North to South. However, one could equally—and perhaps with higher probability—argue for regional differences.

It was certainly not confined to rural Egyptian backwaters, but also occurred on a large—if not larger—scale in the towns.[92] Among members of the gymnasial class, many examples of brother-sister marriage can be found. However, the gymnasial class can only with severe reservations be qualified as an elite proper. Among the elite proper, examples are hard to come by. Apollonios, *strategos* of Apollonopolis Heptakomias and one of the top figures of Hermopolis in the second century, *might* have been married to his sister.[93] In many other elite marriages, it is certain or reasonably certain that the spouses were at least not full brother and sister. That brother-sister marriage occurred among the elite is not in doubt, but that it was widespread remains open to question.

Thus runs a brief summary of the marital patterns of the census population. Before turning to the marital patterns of the third-century elites, it is helpful to discuss first the imperial aristocracy. To what extent could or did marriage patterns of the Roman aristocracy differ from the rest of the population?

In the case of the western part of the Roman empire, it has been argued that a difference existed between the senatorial elite and the larger urban population. For senatorial families the forging of strategic alliances through marriage with other families was of paramount importance. This is reflected in a high divorce rate and frequent remarriages.[94] In a changing political climate, ties could become inconvenient, or better options could offer themselves. As political considerations were of much less importance among the rest of the population, it is likely that the frequency of divorce and remarriage was higher in the senatorial aristocracy than among the rest of the population.[95] Further, there must have been pressure to forge ties through marriage as soon as possible. Women from the upper classes married young, around 14 or earlier, while others married perhaps later, in their late tens or early twenties. Likewise, men from senatorial families tended to marry around 20, while other men may have married later, in their late twenties. The difference in marital ages may be

[92] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 127-128. About one in six of all marriages are full brother-sister marriages. The exact figure of the incidence of brother-sister marriage depends on the weighing of village to urban declarations and the inclusion or exclusion of *P.Oxy.Census* (1997) (91/92?).

[93] Inferred on the basis of patronyms. For doubts, see Clarysse (1989).

[94] Analysed by Bradley (1991) 57-60; 156-176; see also Corbier (1991) 49-63.

[95] Contra Bradley (1991) 175-176, though this follows from his own arguments. See further Treggiari (1991).

more a question of perspective than that it is real, however.[96] Be that as it may, if there is any difference in marital patterns among the elite the evidence from the imperial aristocracy suggests it should be sought in a higher frequency of divorce and remarriage and a lower age at marriage.

Although the evidence for marriages among the elites of Roman Egypt is not exactly abundant, the examples that we have suggest at least no remarkable divergences from the patterns of the census population. As far as the evidence permits us to draw conclusions, it seems that elite ages of marriage follow those of the census population, resulting, presumably, in similar age gaps between spouses. The relative absence of divorces, the frequent early termination of marriages through the death of one of the spouses, the subsequent tendency of men to remarry with younger brides and the almost complete absence of female remarriage all follow the patterns of the census population of Roman Egypt. The only noticeable difference is formed by the absence of brother-sister marriage.

There is little evidence for elite ages at marriage. In principle, all husbands with councillorship must have been older than 25 years, but that tells little about the age they married. However, the little evidence we have fits in well with the patterns of the census population. There is no evidence for particularly early marriage among members of the elite. An Arsinoite gymnasiarch and councillor is likely to have married in his early twenties.[97] By contrast, a trainer at the gymnasium died at age 32 still unmarried, which again was not abnormal among men of the census population.[98] Another case gives a hint about female age of marriage. In a will of a president of Oxyrhynchos, we find two daughters: one minor (below 14) and unmarried, the other above

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[96] Hopkins (1964/1965), Shaw (1987), Saller (1987) and (1994) 45-46. The differences between Hopkins' 'senators' and Saller and Shaw's 'inscription erecting population' may have been exaggerated by Saller and Shaw. It is to be noted that Hopkins' research is also based on inscriptions, and does not necessarily pertain to the senatorial families alone, while the method advocated by Saller and Shaw is *a priori* likely to produce higher ages, as delays in the shift in commemoration are only to be expected. Further, Hopkins' research is based on a small quantity of direct evidence, that of Saller and Shaw on a large quantity of indirect evidence.

[97] His eldest son is 40 when *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) is written. It is not known how much time had elapsed between the father's death and the writing of the document, but it seems to be short. If so, the absence of particular old ages among members of the elite suggests that the father married early, in his early twenties.

[98] *I.Herm.* (1999) 80 (late 2nd-early 3rd cent.), for a παιδοτρίβης.

14 and married. The family composition, with three underaged siblings, suggests the latter is still young, between 14 and, say, 20.[99]

There is an indirect indication of marital ages when married persons act with a so-called *curator*. This type of guardian was required for persons (both men and women) in the age 12 to 25 whose parents were deceased.[100] At the beginning of the fourth century, the son of a deceased magistrate and councillor of both Alexandria and Hermopolis married in Hermopolis with a sister of Aurelia Charite (whom we know through her archive). As he had a *curator*, he married at the latest at age 25.[101] A married woman drew up her will in the presence of a *curator*.[102] In a sale of land, all four children of a deceased Hermopolite gymnasiarch, high priest and councillor share a *curator*. The two sisters of the family are also in the possession of the right of children, implying they had had at least three children. Combined, this suggests marriage in their teens.[103] Again, such marriages would easily accord with the marriage patterns of the census population, where women started to marry from age 12 and men from age 18 onwards.

The existence of an age gap between husband and wife finds an indirect expression in the fact that often the woman survived the man. We find a woman younger than 25 years with children aided by someone not her husband, whereas her sister mentions her own husband. Is the husband of the former one already deceased?[104] A woman seems to live in the household of her father, together with her son. No husband is mentioned. Is he dead?[105] We see a dowry being returned to the mother of a wife whose husband is deceased.[106] We read a petition

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[99] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).

[100] See the brief but lucid remarks of Arjava (1997) 29 on the third-century *curator* and other types of guardians.

[101] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 5 (304), reed. *Analecta Papyrologica* 13 (2001) 81-90. The parents of the wife are alive at the moment she marries, and nothing can be determined about her age from the archive.

[102] *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 38 (bef. ca 260, cf. *P.Princ.* 3 (1942) 174). Note also that her husband is at the time she writes her will *kosmetes* but not (yet?) councillor; perhaps he was still below the minimum age for admittance (25 or 30, see Part One Chapter Four).

[103] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250) (for the right of children see below).

[104] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250) (mentioned above). The woman has (just as her sister) a *curator* and possesses the right of children. The implication is she is younger than 25 and has at least three children.

[105] *P.Ryl.* 4 (1952) 691 (late 3rd cent.), a letter addressed to a councillor named Alexandros. The fact that greetings are given to Alexandros' daughter and her son suggests they live in his household.

[106] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261).

of a woman whose husband, a royal scribe, died in office, leaving her behind with one minor son.[107] A president of the council was survived by his wife and five children, so his opened will tells.[108] Another testator was not only survived by his four children (all minors), his sister, his brother-in-law and his mother, but also by his wife.[109] Many of the wealthy female landowners we find in the evidence must have acquired their independence simply through surviving their husbands.

Just as in the census population, divorce occurred among the elite, but examples are thin on the ground. There is no sign of the strategic divorces and remarriages found in senatorial circles. There is one odd case of an elite divorce, where a married couple divorced and subsequently married each other again. As the second marriage contained different financial arrangements and the woman seems to have been in serious financial trouble, it seems certain that the divorce and subsequent remarriage was a technical one.[110] One other case contains a regular divorce between a person without titles and the daughter of a gymnasiarch:

> Aurelios Thonis-Dioskourides and his wife Aurelia Serenilla, daughter of Syrion-Eustochios, former gymnasiarch of the shining and most shining city of the Oxyrhynchites, greetings.
>
> We agree to dissolve our marriage to one another and not to bring any charge against one another, or in the future to bring any charge, and to take no legal proceedings at all about any matter whatsoever, written or unwritten, among those that concern our(?) said marriage; that each (of us?) has the right to marry by whatever sort of marriage he chooses, without incurring liability or claim, since each of us has recovered his own property in full. The contract of divorce and freedom from liability (is to be) valid, written in two copies, so that each party (may have a single copy) …[111]

To what extent childlessness formed a reason for divorce must remain an open question. From other evidence it appears that the woman in the text just cited was in the possession of the right of children, imply-

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[107] *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.).
[108] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).
[109] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.)—though note the text is a draft.
[110] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1473 (201). The couple had one son, who was aged five. The original marriage was presumably not concluded very long before the divorce and the subsequent remarriage.
[111] *P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3139 (late 3rd- 4th cent) (transl. of the ed. with minor adaptations); in the text cited below her father was styled councillor as well.

ing that her marriage had produced at least three children. At least in this case childlessness was not the reason for the divorce.[112]

From this evidence we can also learn that the consequences of a divorce could be serious. In 300/301 the woman petitioned the prefect, and it is tempting to view her plea in the perspective of her divorce.

> To Klaudios Kleopatros, the most perfect prefect of Egypt, from Aurelia Serenilla daughter of Syrion-Eustochios, ex-gymnasiarch, former (=deceased) councillor of the shining and most shining city of the Oxyrhynchites, acting without a guardian according to the right of children.
>
> It was not right that on top of these accidents that have occurred, contrary to my hopes, as a result of my own destiny, (anyone?) should burden me with rough treatment. However, when the care which I received from my parents … and when the property left to me, in fact by my own father, was illegally detained by violent and influential persons, I had recourse to appeals for its restitution to the incumbents of the prefecture and finally also to your Highness, and commands were issued, through judgements and subscriptions and even court cases conducted by judges appointed by the prefecture from time to time, that restitution of it should be made to me and I should be installed in possession. But since, gaining confidence in their rough treatment of me, they have not only (not?) consented to vacate my possessions but are still putting my name forward to make various (?) payments in respect of them though I have not enjoyed even the income from them, I have been shut up in the tax-collector's prison (?) and I am continually kept in custody in the treasury office, suffering (?) treatment that is not just … not deserved, but incompatible with the laws and the peace granted to us in accordance with them by your Highness.[113]

In a legal sense, divorce might have been easy, but in social terms it was certainly painful.

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[112] *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3302 (300/301). For childlessness as a possible motive for divorce, see *P.Oxy.* 65 (1998) 4481 (179), where a man mentions ceasement of παιδοποιία in the context of his divorce. But it was not necessarily the reason for the termination of the marriage, and the interpretation of the passage is very uncertain (see the lucid commentary in the ed.). The subsequent remarriage of the man, attested in *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229), did produce a child, who later became councillor.

[113] *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3302 (300/301) lines 1-17 (transl. of the ed.); the text continues with a (fragmentarily preserved) request for redress, a date and a file number.

Though it should be conceded that the reasons for the termination of an elite marriage often remain unclear, the examples of actual divorces are so scarce that there can be little doubt that death, not divorce, formed the major cause of the termination of an elite marriage.

Elite women often survived their husbands, but sometimes they died early—perhaps particularly in childbirth. In such cases, male remarriage occurred rather frequently among the elite. The pattern follows that of the census population. When the first wife died, the man remarried, and had children with the second wife as well. Procreation is thus likely to have been a major motive for remarriage. Hermias, former *agoranomos* and councillor, was married twice, first with a woman named Tayris, later with a woman named Tanetbeus, as appears from a cession of a share from a vineyard by a son from the first marriage to the daughter from the second marriage.[114] An *agoranomos* and councillor of Oxyrhynchos had married twice. From one marriage he had one son, from the other two.[115] A son and daughter of an *exegetes* of Oxyrhynchos appear to have had a paternal half-brother, implying a previous marriage of their father.[116]

Although the possibility that women remarried is sometimes mentioned,[117] female remarriage was as unusual among the elite as it was in the census population. Two owners of Jewish slaves are either maternal half-brother and half-sister or, less likely, maternal half-sisters, both implying that the mother must have been remarried; one of these marriages was with a councillor and former *exegetes*.[118] Other elite examples are scarce, if not non-existent.[119] There were no wives counting the years by the number of their husbands.

Thus far, elite marriage seems to follow closely the marital patterns of the census population. There is one exception: brother-sister marriage was absent among the third-century elite. It is useful to consider its causes and effects in more detail.

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[114] *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3638 (220).

[115] *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261).

[116] *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1719 (204).

[117] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261) lines 33-34; *P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3139 (late 3rd- 4th cent) the deed of divorce cited above.

[118] *P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1205 (291). The text is very fragmentary and all relevant names are lost. The interpretation of the family relations rests on the reading ὁμομη[τρία, 'of the same mother' in lines 2-3, but there is little reason to question the reading.

[119] For *P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3137 (295), see the discussion below about the disappearance of brother-sister marriage.

What happened with brother-sister marriage among the general population in the third century and thereafter is properly speaking unknown, but the custom disappears from our sources and was technically outlawed with the general awarding of Roman citizenship in 212. The simplest solution is to assume that it disappeared in reality. However, it would certainly be reasonable to object that marital patterns do not disappear overnight. In such matters, people might not have lend a willing ear to the imperatives of the law, especially when these were not explicitly formulated. For one thing, it is unlikely that all existing brother-sister marriages would in 212 suddenly be dissolved. On the other hand, it seems safe to assume that brother-sister marriage *started* to disappear shortly after 212. This raises the question how quickly marital patterns would change. Would the disappearance of brother-sister marriage take a decade, a generation, a century? And would the disappearance start among specific groups?

When in 212 every Egyptian became subject to Roman law, brother-sister marriage was automatically relegated to the realm of the prohibited.[120] The last certain case of a brother-sister marriage dates from 217.[121] Although there are some hints that such marriages occurred thereafter, solid evidence for continuation of the practice is lacking.[122] All later evidence is problematic or ambiguous.[123] However, it is important to realise that in the course of the third century, the

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120 See also Diocletian in *Collatio* 6.4 (295) and 6.5 (291), which has been taken to refer to Egyptian brother-sister marriages.

121 Bagnall and Frier (1994) 215-Hm-1.

122 Taubenschlag (1955^2) 48 believed in its continuance even “long after the third century” but presented neither arguments nor evidence.

123 *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 111 (3rd cent.) is an invitation to what is in all probability a brother-sister marriage. The text is dated only on palaeographical grounds. Further, *P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3137 (295) shows two spouses sharing the same mother’s name. The editors consider brother-sister marriage between half-siblings likely, but the case would be doubly exceptional: a brother-sister marriage later than 212 A.D (the marriage must have been concluded approximately in the eighties of the third century), combined with a case of female remarriage, which was unusual both among the general population and among the elite. The family belongs to the gymnasial class. In *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 77 (223) a woman has a husband and a father who carry the same name, Sarapiakos (though note that the name of the father is partly restored). That might imply a brother-sister marriage. The question addressed by the declaration, whether the husband or the wife is the owner of a house, would make sense in the context of a brother-sister marriage, for both could be heirs of the same property. But none of this is certain. In *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 888 (after Oct. 287) two siblings are guardians of the off-spring of a deceased sister. The editors speculate that the two may be a brother and sister living in a brother-sister marriage, but the arrangements are perfectly explicable without this unsubstantiated guess.

census declarations peter out.[124] The absence of brother-sister marriage in our evidence may therefore mean nothing more than that proper sources are lacking. And even if more third-century declarations had survived, it is open to question whether brother-sister marriages would still be openly advertised. It is certainly not an academic possibility that the promulgation of the Constitutio Antoniniana primarily affected practices of registration, and only in the second place the custom itself.[125]

Be that as it may, on general grounds we may assume that brother-sister marriage disappeared quickly among the elite. They were most visible, behaved in a more Romanised way than others, were quick to adapt to the new situation, and might have been less permeated by the practice to begin with.

The evidence would support such a conclusion. In all the cases of elite marriages where the names of both fathers of the spouses are known, they are different.[126] The fact that the father's names of such

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[124] See the table and graph in Bagnall and Frier (1994) 8-9. While 201 and 215 are still fairly well covered, 229 has 8 declarations, 243 7 declarations and 257 only 1 declaration. Documents subsequently published (or not included in the original database) only worsen the imbalance in the chronological distribution. Diocletian's reformed census listed males only; its declarations are therefore of no use.

[125] Of the last brother-sister couple attested in the census four records survive: Bagnall and Frier (1994) 187-Hm-1, 215-Hm-1, 215-Hm-2, 229-Hm-1 (in more than one copy). The wife-to-be was not declared in the first declaration, when she must have been 2 years old. For the census of 215, the couple made separate declarations, though the wife lists the presence of her brother-husband. For the census of 229, the two made a single declaration, but were silent about their ties. Perhaps significant?

[126] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1473 (201): Horion son of Hierax remarried to Apollonarion daughter of Chaeremon and Karpokra[.... *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237): Markos Aurelios Saras, son of Markos Aurelios Heliodoros married to Aurelia Apollonia, daughter of Markos Aurelios Apollonios. Rathbone (1991) 44-53: Antonios Philoxenos, possibly son of Alypios, married to Aur. Appiana Diodora-Posidonia, daughter of Aur. Appianos and Demetria. *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 38 (bef. ca 260, cf. *P.Princ.* 3 (1942) 174): Aur. Achilles-Herminos, possibly son of Aur. Herminos-Achilles, married to Aur. Serenilla-Demetria, daughter of Pholippianos-Kopreas and Aur. Asklatarion-Koprilla. *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261) with Moioli (1987): Aur. Spartiates-Chairemon, son of Sarapion-Apollonianos married to Aurelia Dioskouriaina-Sabeina, daughter of Dioskourides. *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (3rd cent.): Achillion-Apollonios, son of Apollonios married to Aurelia Aristous, daughter of Aurelios Herodes. *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent. I take H.G.V.'s date 1st half 3rd cent.(?) to be a mistake; note that the grandfather of the woman was a councillor of Herakleopolis, which certainly excludes a date early in the 3rd cent.): N.N.-Philoxenos, son of Herakleios, married to Aur. Demetria, daughter of Asklepiades and Ise...; her parents are also from different fathers. Cf. also *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2566 (225): Aur. Diogenes s. of Sarapammon possibly married to Aur. Apollonarios, daughter of Zoilos. *P.Charite* (1981) introduction and *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) p.65 with *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 5, reed. *Analecta Papyrologica* 13 (2001) 81-90, presents

spouses differ does not only exclude automatically marriage between full brothers and sisters.[127] Given the lack of female remarriage, marriages between half-siblings can also be excluded with almost complete certainty. Further, in reconstructed family trees there is no hint of brother-sister marriage either. Lastly, the strictly observed differentiation of the maternal and paternal branches of the family in some elite inscriptions of Alexandrian and Pachnemounite families implies a similar absence of this type of intermarriage.[128]

On a more general level, it is noticeable that references to brother-sister marriages in lawsuits are absent. Arguments from silence are dangerous, but in this case the logic is relatively clear. In the contested area of inheritances, illicit marriages are never mentioned. One would expect that the transmission of property to the offspring of brother-sister marriages would be very vulnerable to claims from others, especially in a society that was not known for restraint when it came to litigation. This would affect all those with property, and hence especially the members of the elites.

For all these reasons, there can be little doubt that brother-sister marriage did not play an important role among the third-century elite, and probably it did not play any role at all. There is neither evidence nor logic for the continuation of the practice.

What would the effects of the absence of brother-sister marriage among the elite be? In the census population, brother-sister marriages were invariably first marriages. As a rule, such a marriage occurred at a young age: mean age of marriage must have been lower in brother-sister marriages than in other marriages. Further, the age gap between the brothers and sisters was relatively small. All else remaining equal, the absence of brother-sister marriage in the third-century elites would have delayed the start of marriage and widened the mean age gap between the spouses.

The point is not that these effects *must* have occurred among the third-century elites. They are at any rate not visible in our impressionistic evidence. What is important is that the only possible divergence

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three fourth-century cases: Amazonios son of Euthalios married Demetria-Ammonia daughter of Polydeukes; Aur. Adelphios-Dionysodoros son of Adelphios married Aur. Charite, daughter of Amazonios and Demetria-Ammonia; Thespesios son of Septimion-Ammonion married Euethion daughter of Amazonios and Demetria-Ammonia.

[127] The method only allows for negative conclusions, for if the names of the fathers are the same, there is of course still a possibility of coincidental homonymy.

[128] *I.Alex.* (1994) 101 (3rd cent.); *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 557 (shortly after 212); *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 558 (mid-late 3rd cent.).

in marriage patterns that we have points in the wrong direction. What we would expect on the basis of senatorial marriage patterns is that the age of marriage would be lower, not higher. By contrast, the disappearance of brother-sister marriage would not lead to earlier marriage, but, if anything, to later marriage.

The evidence for differences in elite marriage is admittedly meagre. The sources suggest at least the absence of radical differences in the marital patterns of the elite. With the exception of brother-sister marriage, patterns of marriage seem to have followed those of the census population. There is no hint of a high frequency of divorces. Whereas evidence concerning senatorial marriage may point to marriage earlier than the rest of the population, the effects of the disappearance of brother-sister marriage point in the opposite direction: a delayed start, and a larger age gap. It is therefore impossible to argue for earlier marriage among members of the third-century Egyptian elite. In the absence of any indication to the contrary it is safer to assume that the marital patterns of the elite did not differ significantly from those of the census population.

Fertility

Lastly, fertility. Again, the census population of Egypt will be discussed first, followed by a brief discussion of fertility among the senatorial elite, and a discussion of possible divergences in the fertility of third-century urban elites.

Fertility is most conveniently expressed as the average number of children per mother.[129] To estimate this figure for the census population is unproblematic, as it is in a stable population a direct function of levels of mortality. Bagnall and Frier argued that model West females level 2 with a slow growth level produced an age distribution closest to that of the women of the census declarations. With such a level and growth rate, the total fertility rate would be 5.979. If a stationary population were assumed instead, the rate would be slightly, but not significantly, lower. Such rates mean that women who survived to age 50 bore on average almost 6 children.[130] Of these, only few would survive into adulthood.

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[129] Newell (1988) 35-44 for different ways to analyse fertility.
[130] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 138-139.

This figure of almost 6 children is high, especially as it is an average. However, it is not extremely so, as marriage was universal and started in the case of women right from the beginning of the reproductive period. Levels of fertility were high, but certainly not at what would have been maximally possible. They fell well below natural fertility. Bagnall and Frier's remark is well worth citing:

> In a population in which women marry early, the challenge posed by high mortality is met through a demographic strategy in which the heavy burden of childbirth is distributed as widely as possible among fertile women; not only do women marry early, but all or virtually all women marry. Early socialization into marriage and childbirth is thus an all but invariable part of a woman's experience as she becomes an adult. Although such a strategy has self-evident social and cultural costs, it at least spreads the risk of childbearing as a burden placed specifically on women.[131]

The corollary of the fact that fertility was well below what was theoretically possible is that couples used means to limit their fertility. Knowledge of contraception was slight,[132] but that is not the whole story. In an important argument, Frier has shown that the shape of the maternity curve (a curve that plots numbers of births against ages of mothers) provides important evidence about the way fertility was limited. The fact that in the maternity curve of the census declarations the number of children does not drop radically after a certain point indicates the absence of direct means of fertility limitation, such as abortion or contraception. Instead, indirect limitations in fertility were responsible for the regular spacing of children over the reproductive period. Breast-feeding delays the resumption of ovulation; wetnurse-contracts suggest moreover that breastfeeding might have been combined with a significant period of sexual abstinence. Delaying strategies like breast-feeding thus must have played a large role in keeping the number of births at a bearable level.[133]

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[131] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 143-144.

[132] Hopkins (1965/1966), summarized by Bagnall and Frier (1994) 149: "Of the suggested methods, some could have been effective for their purpose, some worked only by endangering the mother's life, but most partook of folk magic, and we know next to nothing about their actual use in the general population".

[133] Frier (1994); Bagnall and Frier (1994) 148-151; Frier (2001). Frier adds force to the argument by emphasising that indirect fertility limitation was the norm in all known demographic regimes before the Fertility Transition.

Of adoption, which can be regarded as an artificial means to regulate one's number of children, there is little sign. Though adoption existed as a legal concept[134] and the possibility of raising other people's children is frequently mentioned, adoption does not occur in the census documents.[135] If children of other parents were raised, they were not adopted but brought up as slaves. Only in late antiquity, from the fourth to the sixth century, do references to adoption increase slightly.[136]

At what age did men and women have children? In the case of maternity, the census declarations suggest that the peak in the age of motherhood lies between 17 and 30, with a mean age of around 27 years. Unsurprisingly, the age distribution of fatherhood shows a much wider spectrum than in the case of maternity, and continues well into the sixties. Fatherhood before age 20 is rare, which is in line with the findings about first age of male marriage. Average age of paternity is high, after adjustment for life expectancy about 39.[137]

Before turning to the Egyptian elites it is again instructive to discuss briefly the fertility of the imperial aristocracy. In Roman elite groups differences in levels of fertility are certainly possible. Of all the properties of the demographic regime, fertility has the most room for demographic manoeuvre, although in high mortality regimes the possibilities are certainly not infinite, because average levels of fertility must be relatively high to avoid rapid contraction.[138] The focus on differential demography has been far too often on mortality, whereas it is fertility that is to a large extent dependent on social and cultural patterns, and therefore has the potential to vary from group to group.

The senatorial elite of Rome is widely supposed to have limited their number of children.[139] The Augustan marriage laws make repeated reference to the low number of children and try to offer legal incentives to increase it. Their frequent repetition shows they were ineffective. Further, to compensate cases where no children survived, adoption was frequent. By passing legal authority to a man different from the real father, an artificial kin-relationship was created between

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134 Kuryłowicz (1983).

135 Bagnall and Frier (1994) 155 n.73.

136 Montevecchi (1988^2) 203 noting that "i documenti diretti dell'adozione sono scarsissimi e tutti di età tarda" (= 4th cent. and later).

137 Bagnall and Frier (1994) 135-139, 145-147.

138 Livi-Bacci (2001^3) 21-24 for the limitations.

139 Hopkins (1965/1966); Parkin (1992) 119 with n.122.

the man (and his wife) and the adopted person, usually a young or adult male. Its purpose was the creation of an alliance between families or the possibility to transmit property through inheritance, and usually both.[140]

However, care should be exercised with respect to the supposed fertility limitation because the limited amount of concrete evidence suggests otherwise. A tabulation of children of emperors shows no specific limitations in the number of children compared to normal levels of fertility.[141] The numbers involved are small and different social and demographic dynamics may operate in imperial families, but overall, they must have stood close to the senatorial demographic regime.

To what extent did fertility patterns differ among the urban elite of Roman Egypt? The evidence for elite families in Roman Egypt is limited, and does not allow for tabulations: almost no ages survive, it is almost never certain that the family is completely recorded. Moreover, the evidence tends by its very nature to record single children more often. But at least it does not show any exceptional situations. As far as we can see, elite families were not smaller than others.

Some couples remained childless, or became childless because all their children died. Tracing families that die out is always difficult, for usually we cannot tell whether the silence of the sources is coincidental or not. However, we have some evidence concerning their inheritances. A councillor of Hermopolis died childless and intestate.[142] We find some people claiming the inheritance of childless couples. And we see unclaimed elite property accruing to the fisc.[143] A daughter of Aurelios Appianos, the Alexandrian owner of an enormous estate in the Fayum, was married, but the couple apparently had no children; their estate was confiscated after their deaths.[144] Not all of such confiscations will have been the result of discontinued family lines,[145] but some certainly were.

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[140] Corbier (1991) 63-76.

[141] Scheidel (1999) 266-279. If anything, the number of children is underreported, not overreported. If the figures are higher, not lower, they certainly cannot be used to show any bias for limitation in family size.

[142] *P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289)

[143] *C.P.R.* 5 (1976) 4 R° (ca 237-238) with K.A. Worp, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 30 (1978) 241. The text refers to a letter by the *Idios Logos* concerning the *census* of a late councillor.

[144] Rathbone (1991) 44-53.

[145] The editor of *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 70 (272/273 or 278/279) suggests Horion-

Just as in the census population, elite family size could vary. An Oxyrhynchite councillor had at least one son and one daughter, but possibly one or two more daughters.[146] In one generation the family tree of an important family of *strategoi* shows two sons, and one daughter, of whom one son married; the couple had subsequently two sons and one daughter. The latter had one son before her husband died.[147]

Given the prevailing levels of mortality, the family composition at the death of one of the parents could differ from case to case. Some families were very small, either because many children had already died, or because the parent died young. A man died leaving a single son behind who was a minor.[148] Another also left behind a sole male heir.[149] From the only known case of female remarriage among the elite, two children survived, one from each marriage.[150] A woman died leaving behind two daughters, still minors.[151] Another one left behind two minor sons.[152] A tax register shows two daughters and the heirs of one son of a high priest, presumably himself deceased as well.[153] However, many other families were relatively large. The heirs of a councillor consist of two sons, both councillor themselves (and hence above 25), and a daughter, married and with right of children (the right to act without guardian because she had had three children).[154] At the moment he wrote his will a testator had at least four children: three sons, two of them minors, and one daughter, who was married to a president of the council.[155] We see four children of a deceased gymnasiarch, high priest and councillor of Hermopolis, selling a piece of

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Berenikianos died without heirs, as a plot of his estate is in the hands of the fisc. However, *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3565 (245) shows he had a son and grandson.

[146] As reconstructed by B. Nielsen, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 31 (1994) 129-136, though except for Techosous all rather hypothetical.

[147] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261) with Moioli (1987).

[148] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261).

[149] *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.).

[150] *P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1205 (291). As the slaves that are manumitted in this text belong to the child of both marriages, the slaves probably became the property of the children as part of their maternal inheritance, implying the mother had died. It can not entirely be ruled out, however, that her marriages produced more children.

[151] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237).

[152] *P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4438 (252).

[153] *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2346 (late 3rd cent.) lines 48-56. It is not known how long before he died.

[154] *P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289) The woman has no *curator*, hence she is likely to be older than 25 as well.

[155] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.).

land. As they all share a *curator*, they must have been under 25.[156] An Arsinoite gymnasiarch and councillor was survived by two sons and one daughter, while one further son is known to have died.[157] A Hermopolite councillor left behind two sons and two daughters.[158] The surviving off-spring of a former gymnasiarch consisted of at least three sons and one daughter.[159] A president of the council was survived by five children: three sons and two daughters, three of them minors, so his opened will tells.[160]

That elite families could be relatively large is also shown by the frequent use of the *ius trium liberorum*, 'the right of three children'. This privilege to act without guardian was given to a woman when she could show to have had three children. Before the general grant of Roman citizenship in 212, only a few references to the 'right of three children' can be found in the papyri, undoubtedly because there were very few Roman citizens in Egypt. After 212, when Roman law became applicable to the whole population of Roman Egypt, the privilege was rapidly embraced: many women are suddenly found in the possession of the *ius trium liberorum*. There are dozens of cases where women operate without guardian and refer explicitly to the right.[161]

Especially elite women repeatedly referred to the right.[162] An Antinoite woman who was married to a Herakleopolite councillor declares their 25 days old son in Antinoopolis, acting according to the right of three children. Unless she had obtained the right directly with the new birth, the implication is that this is (at least) her fourth child.[163] We see two sisters possessing the right; as they have a *curator*, they must

[156] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250); the two sisters have the right of children and hence are likely to be in their early twenties.

[157] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221); it is not known how much time had elapsed between his death and the drawing of the document in which his children figure, but it seems to be short.

[158] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250).

[159] *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247);. I take it that the father is deceased and that the family is complete, but neither is completely certain.

[160] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).

[161] See the useful discussion in Sijpesteijn (1965), cf. Beaucamp (1992) 197-212 for the later period, and the brief discussion by Arjavi (1997).

[162] Sijpesteijn (1965) for a list of all cases of the right of children; updates were published by him in *Aegyptus* 56 (1976) 44-45 and in *P.Mich.* 15 (1982) app. 2, by Beaucamp (1992) 197-212 and by J.A. Sheridan, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 33 (1996) 117-131.

[163] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 2 (247/248).

have met the required number of three children early, at the latest at age 25.[164]

It is not certain whether the requirement was merely that three living children were born, or that they had to be alive at the moment of application.[165] Aurelia Thaïsous-Lolliane, when she petitioned for the right, simply stated that she was 'adorned with *eupaidia*', without specifying the proofs.[166] However, it seems probable that all three children had to be alive at the moment the application was made, for how could proof otherwise be provided?[167] In this period the registration of the population was rather haphazard. Further, it seems also likely that the application was not always made directly when the requirement was met, but only when the need arose, in cases of transactions for which a guardian was required. What is certain is that the privilege was not revoked if children died subsequently. A woman named Aurelia Eustorgis had only one living child left, a daughter, when she wrote her will, yet she still acted without a guardian because of her *ius trium liberorum*.[168] Thus, the children probably had to be alive at the moment of application, but the right could be used afterwards, independent of whether they survived.

The fact that references to the right of children concern mostly elite women is no surprise and has in itself little to do with their fertility. Without doubt the elite was the most romanised part of Egyptian society and therefore quick to adopt Roman legal practice. Further, elite women had more transactions for which the presence of a guardian would normally be required.

The fact that they made so frequently use of the right of children is nevertheless of some demographic significance because it has impli-

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[164] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250).

[165] Cf. Parkin (1992) 116-120 for the problem and its demographic implications. However, he ignored the Egyptian evidence and posed the question as a choice between two alternatives: were the children ever-born or had they to be alive. Arjava (1997) 27, despite citing Parkin (1992) elsewhere, ignored the problem and stated as a fact that the right was given in case a woman had given birth to three living children.

[166] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1467 (263) Her right of children is again mentioned in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1475 (267).

[167] Though note that the claim made in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1467 (263) will only be verified if necessary, see line 22. Cf. *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.), where a wife of a just deceased husband has one son only and acts with a *kurios*. As the son is a minor *and* a gymnasiarch, it seems likely he is in his teens. Under normal patterns of fertility, this would suggest that the couple had had more children. Nevertheless the woman does not have the right of children. All this is of course hypothetical.

[168] *P.Lips.* 1 (1906) 29 (295). A son was deceased some time before.

cations for levels of elite fertility. Given the high levels of infant mortality, it would not be particularly easy to meet the criterion of three living children. With three children living at the time of application, a total fertility rate of five to six children is implied.[169] This rate is close to the imputed average fertility rate for the whole population. The frequent mentioning of the right among elite women therefore certainly runs counter to the idea that elite families were comparatively small.

One further consideration concerns fertility limitation. As was mentioned above, Bagnall and Frier argue that limitations of fertility were mainly of an indirect kind: no contraceptives or abortions, but, mainly, breast-feeding. From the stipulations in wet-nurse contracts they inferred that breast-feeding was commonly used.[170] However, if breast-feeding is considered the main means to limit fertility, it is to be kept in mind that elite women delegated breast-feeding to other women.[171] It is therefore impossible to argue that elite women limited their fertility in this way.[172] It is of course entirely possible that the elite made use of other means to limit their number of children, perhaps even direct ones. However, if anyone wants to find evidence for fertility limitation in elite circles, it certainly should not be sought in breast-feeding.

For more than one reason, one would expect adoption of male children to be frequent among members of the third-century elites of Roman Egypt. Not all families produced sons, and not all these sons would survive into adulthood. Adoption as a concept was known both to local and to Roman law.[173] Roman elite ideology was of course all too familiar with the concept. The fact that after 212 A.D things Roman were rapidly embraced by the local elites would make it all the likelier that adoption became prevalent among its members.

Yet, this was not the case. In view of contemporary Roman elite attitudes adoption, rather surprisingly, hardly occurred among the

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[169] Parkin (1992) 116-120.

[170] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 149-150.

[171] Contra Bagnall and Frier (1994) 149-150 the surviving wet-nurse contracts are not made by members of the elite. Although only two third-century examples survive, none of those from other periods can be located in an elite context either, see M. Manca Masciadri and O. Montevecchi, *I contratti di baliatico* (1984). I take it that members of the elite used their own slaves, who were, after all, supposed to produce children. See further Bradley (1991) 13-36, esp. 24-25; his epigraphical, legal and literary evidence from other parts of the Roman world clearly shows that elite families often used slave women as nurses.

[172] A similar argument for senatorial women in Parkin (1992) 130-131.

[173] Kuryłowicz (1983).

third-century elites of Roman Egypt. Not a single third-century act of adoption survives, let alone a document that concerns members of the elite.[174] Only one third-century testament betrays any sign of adoption. Other references to adoption are equally scarce.[175] There is some evidence for fostering. A magistrate and councillor of Oxyrhynchos took the three children of a family member into his house, while their mother, now a widow, lived alone.[176] However, the evidence is meagre and none of it suggests the creation of artificial family ties at a structural level among the elite.

To try to explain the absence of a social phenomenon is perhaps not the most rewarding of activities, but some tentative explanations may be offered. In the first place, it is noteworthy that adopted children were not admitted to the privileged classes of metropolites and the gymnasial class. The oath that declarants had to swear placed adopted children in line with false children, usurpation of other people's credentials or the misuse of identity of names.[177] Hardly respectable company. It does not seem far-fetched to suppose that adopted persons met serious social obstacles elsewhere, especially in the higher circles of municipal society.

Secondly, the one will that *does* mention an adopted son points in the same direction. This testament is described as Roman and was made by an Alexandrian citizen.[178] His family did not belong to the Alexandrian elite, but was certainly a family of some wealth and status according to local standards. The testator had only one (surviving) child, a daughter, and had in addition adopted a son. With a view to the continuation of the family, his adoption seemed sensible, but the most remarkable feature of the will is that the adopted son obtained a very small share of the inheritance compared to the daughter: she obtained 11/12th of the inheritance, he only 1/12th. Given the normal tendency towards equality (and the less noticeable tendency to

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174 The two surviving fourth-century acts of adoption, *P.Oxy*. 9 (1912) 1206 (335 A.D) and *P.Lips*. 1 (1906) 28 (381), do not concern members of the elite.

175 *P.Oxy*. 14 (1920) 1719 (204) mentions an adopted metropolite below the elite. For an adoption by a former gymnasiarch somewhat earlier, see *S.B*. 18 (1993) 13176 (168) lines 186-188.

176 *P.Oxy*. 34 (1968) 2711 (271); for a foster father below the elite see *P.Oxy.Hels*. (1979) 26 (296).

177 See the oath for the scrutiny for gymnasial status in e.g. *P.Oxy*. 18 (1941) 2186 (260).

178 *P.Lips*. 1 (1906) 10 (240). The text itself is not a will, but a petition in which a reference is made to a Roman will drawn up in 226.

favour sons over daughters), this was a remarkable distribution indeed. It strongly implies that adopted children did not have the same status as own children.[179] Adoption was thus possible if no sons were available, but only solved a small part of the problem.

Finally, we need to look at patterns of maternity and paternity. These are difficult to reconstruct but the evidence we have again suggests nothing out of the ordinary.

There were mothers who had children while they were still minors. Two married sisters share a single *curator* with their two brothers. The fact that they possessed both the right of children implies for each three births before age 26.[180] For men, two cases suggest somewhat more dispersion in the patterns. A gymnasiarch and councillor had at least four children within a sixteen year period: the eldest son was 40, then there was another son who died, then a daughter of 33, then a son of 24.[181] Of the family of *strategoi* of Sarapion-Apollonianos, three children of Aurelios Spartiates-Chairemon and Aurelia Dioskouriaina-Sabeina are attested. Their father, Aurelios Spartiates-Chairemon, must have been born before 219. Apollonarion, the daughter, must have been born before 235, Sarapion-Apollonianos at the latest in 240, while Spartiates-Pausanias must have been born between 240 and 250.[182] That fatherhood could occur at a later date is also suggested by the case of a man who left behind minor children more than a decade after he had been president—an office which by its very nature is likely to have been held relatively late in one's career.[183]

To conclude: the evidence offers no unequivocal support for lower fertility among the elite families of Roman Egypt. The argument is thus the same as with mortality and marriage. Anecdotal evidence

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[179] See also *P.Lips.* 1 (1906) 10 (240) column 2 line 15n.

[180] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250). Of one of them the husband is mentioned. The husband of the other may have already been deceased, as she is aided by some other man.

[181] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221). The existence of the deceased son is uncertain. The ages are all approximate.

[182] My own analysis of the data assembled by Moioli (1987). Aurelios Spartiates-Chairemon is attested as councillor in 244, hence must have been 25 or older. Apollonarion is above minority (>25) when her husband dies in 260/1. Note that her son is already gymnasiarch, though still a minor. Sarapion-Apollonianos is in 265 attested as councillor and is therefore older than 25. Spartiates-Pausanias is attested in 250, but in 265 he is still a minor (<26).

[183] Gaios Ioulios Diogenes, for which see the Appendix. In 274 he is already attested as officeholder; he was president in 279/280 and may have had at that point a son; he may have been dead by 290; minor heirs are mentioned in 293.

suggests elite families of normal size. As far as the evidence allows us to see, elite families do not seem abnormal in any respect. Evidence about the widespread use of the right of children runs counter to the idea that levels of fertility were lower among the elite. The only observable divergence in elite behaviour, the absence of a major form of fertility limitation, would only imply higher, not lower fertility. Lastly, adoption was no real option, again just as in the census population.

Conclusion

As stated at the outset, the possibilities to study elite demography are fairly limited. What we have are individual examples, and we can formulate some general considerations on the basis of what we know about the behaviour of the third-century elites. That is not much—though it might as well be stated that this is more than can be done for most social groups of the ancient world.

While these examples and considerations cannot offer anything resembling precision, they do permit a negative argument. The individual examples show that the experience of the elite remains similar to that of the census population. Mortality reaps at a steady pace, there is no evidence for particularly old ages, marriage does not take place particularly early, and levels of fertility are not particularly low. Some of the more general considerations certainly allow for the possibility of differences. However, none points in the direction one would expect. Mortality may have been slightly lower because the elite enjoyed a higher standard of living, but this would be offset by the effects of living in a disease-infected urban environment. The absence of brother-sister marriage among the elite would if anything only increase age at marriage, not decrease it. If breast-feeding was the preferred means of fertility limitation, the fact that elite families used wet-nurses could only increase, not decrease, levels of fertility.

Such negative arguments do not exclude completely the possibility of divergences. They do make them more unlikely, however. If one still wants to find differences, they have to be sought in areas where our sources do not shed light. The better we are able to reduce such *terra incognita*, the more certain we can be. Economy of hypothesis, then, leads to a default position: as there are no indications for differences that point in the expected direction, it is preferable to assume

that there are none, or at least no radical ones. The demographic regime of the elite was similar to, if not the same as, that of the census population.

What this implies for the study of Roman demography in general remains to be seen. In the absence of demographic studies of other local elites it remains impossible to say how typical the demographic experience of the Egyptian elites was. What it does suggest, however, is that it is unwise to assume that the demographic regime of the one group which has been studied extensively, the senatorial elite, should be taken as a model for the local elites. It seems much more likely that the highly peculiar marriage patterns of the senatorial elites, with frequent divorces and remarriages, was the product of very specific circumstances. If the demographic regime of the local elites of Egypt remained firmly rooted in local traditions, would it not make more sense to assume that the same applied to local elites elsewhere?

The demographic regime of the third-century elites of Roman Egypt was not only one of high mortality and high fertility, but also one of high volatility. It was not the high level of mortality itself that formed the main problem, but its extremely random character. Even if a newborn child survived the crucial first five years, there was still a very high chance that he or she died in the years following childhood. The same applies to fertility. The number of childbirths was high, though not extremely so. Again, what seems more important is that the number of surviving children was highly unpredictable: one could end up with anything from no children to a very high number. The children in turn had no guarantee their parents would survive until they reached adulthood.

This type of volatility is reflected in the answers that the *Sortes Astrampsychi* gave, the oracle with which this chapter began. Hence, we find answers like:

> The baby will live. Care for it.
> You will not obtain a good marriage.
> You will die before your wife.
> You will obtain a good marriage, but not now.

In the demographic lottery, almost any outcome was possible.

PART TWO CHAPTER THREE

PROPERTY TRANSMISSION

THE IMPORTANCE OF INHERITING

Wealth was all important in the Roman world. A member of the local elite derived his status from the fact that he was a large landowner who could live from the proceeds of his estate. In third-century Egypt, a member of the elite of a *metropolis* would own lands in scattered plots all over the nome. These plots not only produced the income that was necessary to keep up elite appearances, but the estates also created networks of dependency: the lands were usually leased to peasants living in villages.

Most wealth was inherited. There can be little doubt that intergenerational property transmission played a pivotal role in the continuation of elite families. The discussion in Part One Chapter Three about the nature of elite wealth showed that the socially accepted ways to generate income outside agriculture were rather limited. Most if not all business ventures remained safely connected to the agricultural economy. Therefore the chance to qualify for the elite depended to a large extent simply on the size of the inheritance.

Large amounts of lands, houses, slaves and money changed hands from generation to generation. A councillor's wife died leaving behind an inheritance to the value of 200,000 drachmas, half the minimum to qualify for the equestrian order.[1] A daughter of an Oxyrhynchite councillor had a husband who died in office serving as royal scribe. Their son, who as a minor had already served as gymnasiarch, inherited the same sum.[2] In another case, a president of the town council of Oxyrhynchos divided in his will among his five children corn-lands in two different places, a vineyard, a house, and six

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[1] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237), and cf. *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296), where one of the heirs has only one pair of oxen.

[2] *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (3rd cent).

slaves, while some more property went to others. To judge from the size of the dowry for one of the daughters, the total value of the property was at least 120,000 drachmas, and quite likely much more.[3] Another fragmentary will originating from the milieu of the Oxyrhynchite elite mentions amounts of gold and silver, donkeys and small cattle, clothing, shares of houses, plots of land, and slaves.[4]

Much was at stake in the transfer of such property. It comes as no surprise that inheritances formed a major battleground and were a locus of societal tension. Much care was given to the appointment of guardians for minor children. For obvious reasons, these would often be relatives, for example a brother or a brother-in-law. But such relatives could also have a stake in the inheritance themselves.[5] Conflicts had the power to alienate family members from each other for life. We read of greedy uncles appropriating the property of minors whose rights they were supposed to safeguard, of law-suits continuing for years, even decades, sometimes even taken over by subsequent generations with equal ferocity.[6] As one woman petitioning the prefect about the misbehaviour of her uncles put it, "to be wronged by strangers is hard, but to be wronged even by kinsmen is very hard".[7] Conversely, outside interference by other members of the elite was also feared: having appointed a guardian for his minor children, a testator who was president of the town council added: "accordingly I do not

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[3] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276), discussed in the introduction to Part One Chapter Three.

[4] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.). The testator's name and status are lost; elite status is indicated by the fact that his brother-in-law is a former president.

[5] So in.*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.), where the word γαμβρός should probably be translated as brother-in-law, not as son-in-law (as the ed. has it). Note that in this case the guardian is a maternal uncle, whereas the inheritance is a paternal one; the guardian would in this case have no direct claim in the inheritance. For a (probable) guardian of the children of a nephew (brother's son, probably), see *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2711 (271). For the involvement of a maternal uncle—in this case not a greedy one—with the inheritance from his father to his minor nieces, see *P.Mich.* 18 (1996) 789 (after 190). For the general practice to appoint uncles as guardians, see *P.Mert.* 1 (1948) 26 (274) with the remarks made in its introduction; cf. also *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 888 (after Oct. 287).

[6] See *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3117 R° (235), though not necessarily originating from elite circles, where the party of the claimants seems already to be in its third generation. For the division of an estate among five persons, some of them related, through an appointed judge, see *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1637 (256-261). For theft of papers relevant for an inheritance, possibly by one of the three brothers who were the heirs, see *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3289 (258/259) with the commentary of the editors. Cf. also *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3302 (300/301).

[7] *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2713 (ca 297); not necessarily from an elite context.

wish any magistrate or deputy or any other person to intrude himself".[8] In another case a woman resigned the inheritance of her brother, who had died intestate and childless, to a magistrate to whom her brother had been in debt and petitioned the *strategos* accordingly:

> Whereas then my brother on my father's side Aurelios Kopreas, with whom I have no partnership and who lived alone ..., died intestate and childless, and whereas I touched nothing of his nor entered upon the inheritance, and whereas Aurelios Eudaimon, *kosmetes*, son of Eudaimon, ex-*agonothetes* and former (=deceased) councillor of the same city of Hermopolis, professing to be a creditor of his, persecutes and annoys me unjustly, and I am ignorant whether there are other creditors of my said brother, I therefore am compelled to present this petition to you, renouncing and resigning to Eudaimon the inheritance of my said brother in compensation for the sums due to him and for any others which may be claimed on my said brother's account, and I request you to instruct an assistant to present a duplicate of this petition to him for his information, so that I may keep my property in freedom, inviolate, and undisturbed in respect of my brother, of whose property I possess nothing, according to the imperial ordinances.[9]

Inheritances were important, and property transmission formed one of the crucial moments in the life cycle of elite families. There is thus a need to study the transfer of wealth to subsequent generations in greater detail. The aim of this chapter is to analyse how members of the urban elites of third-century Roman Egypt transmitted their property, to whom, and with what effects.

In intestate succession, radical partible inheritance was the norm. It ensured complete equality between all children, and favoured a situation in which at least in theory the property of husband and wife were kept separate. In such a system, intergenerational continuity was mainly a function of demography. The number of surviving children determined directly the size of their shares of the inheritance. The more survivors, the smaller the size of the share. As the consequences for the continuity of the family could be rather dramatic, it is a crucial question to what extent members of the elite had possibilities to miti-

[8] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) line 21. The fact that councils usually appointed guardians is probably the reason for the testator's worry.

[9] *P.Ryl.* 2 (1915) 117 (269) lines 15-27 (transl. ed.).

gate these effects. How much flexibility did they have in the transmission of property?

The role of dowries forms the first object of inquiry. All women married, and brought a dowry into the marriage. In practice dowries constituted a part of a daughter's inheritance. The one indirectly compensated the other: receiving a dowry meant a smaller share in the inheritance. Dowries, however, were bound to be composed differently from the inheritance: they consisted of more 'female' goods, and comprised less or no real estate. Women were therefore at a disadvantage with regard to inheriting real property. Even radical equality in inheritance patterns produced no complete equality between men and women. However, the effects were not as large as could be supposed. As the size of dowries was small relative to the size of inheritances, the effects are unlikely to have led to a complete distortion of the patterns of radical partible inheritance.

Wills form the second object of study. Wills allowed more freedom in the choice of recipients than intestate succession. It seems likely that the use of wills was extensive among the elite. Many of these wills were Roman in form, sometimes even in content. Wills deviated from the notion of complete equality in two respects: there was a tendency to favour male over female children, and there was a tendency to endow the eldest son with extra property. Such tendencies are never clear: they remain fuzzy and escape generalisation. Both tendencies placed sons in a somewhat more advantageous position, but testamentary freedom was not unlimited. The force of social custom should not be underestimated. Even in wills the notion of partible inheritance remained strong.

The implications for intergenerational continuity are clear. Property transmission among the elite did not contain all the drama to be associated with rigid application of the rules of intestate partible inheritance. Testation offered some ways to increase the chance of succession from father to son. However, despite possibilities for mitigation, the use of a will offered certainly no guarantee. The principle of equality was much too deeply ingrained in society. The patterns produced by intestate succession were mitigated but not fundamentally changed. In consequence, much remained decided in the demographic lottery. Sole surviving sons were best placed to follow in their father's footsteps, while the chances of succession increasingly declined with each additional surviving child.

Rules of Inheritance

The rules governing the transmission of property transmission under intestacy form the natural starting point of the inquiry. They were the point of reference and to a large degree informed practices of testate succession.

There can be little doubt that partible inheritance was the norm in the ancient world. Property would be split between all children. However, the way the property was divided was by no means uniform. It differed from *polis* to *polis*, from region to region, from society to society. Large differences existed in the rights accorded to women, and the moment and form in which they received their allotted portion.[10]

The form of intestate property transmission that was in use in the *metropoleis* of third-century Egypt was one of *radical* partible inheritance.[11] In the absence of a document regulating its transmission to subsequent generations, property was split in equal shares between all children. Daughters were thus entitled to similar shares as sons. In consequence, women could become owners of substantial property. In marriage, husband and wife were both supposed to bring in property, which, at least in theory, was kept separate from each other during the marriage. Husband and wife did not inherit from each other.[12] Moreover, women not only had the right to own property; they could also transmit it to their children independent of their husbands. Its transmission could occur at different moments and in different forms.[13] Hence, inherited property could be called 'paternal' or 'maternal'.[14]

It is important to emphasise the unwritten character of the principle of radical partible inheritance. Many remarks in the documents refer to partible inheritance—especially the stock-phrase 'in equal shares', but references are not rulings. Some rulings did in fact exist,

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[10] An overview in Lane Fox (1985), cf. Asheri (1963) and, for Sparta, Hodkinson (1986) for the Hellenistic East van Bremen (1996) and Dixon (1992) for Roman law and society.

[11] My impression is that by this period the inheritance laws of the Greek *poleis* did not differ from those of the *metropoleis*. Note that the estimate of the size of the estate of a wealthy Alexandrian family in el Abbadi (1975) is based on this premise. Cf. also the next footnote.

[12] The scenario sketched in Rathbone (1991) 50 about a transfer of an Alexandrian estate between spouses is therefore either incorrect or implies differences with Alexandrian inheritance laws—cf. the previous footnote.

[13] Rowlandson (1996) 139-142.

[14] E.g. *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1697 (242) for 'my paternal house'.

but there was no coherent codified law of succession. The rules of the game were not written down. They simply were there.

The fact that the rules of inheritance remained unwritten poses interesting problems. We may wonder whether in the absence of written law individuals were tempted to alter the rules of the game. To what extent could people deviate from the principle of radical partible inheritance? And in the absence of codification, how stable was the principle over time? Was it subject to change in the long run?

At first sight, unwritten custom lends itself easily to flexibility. However, used as we are to the all-pervasive presence of writing and written law in our society, it is easy to underestimate the force of social imperatives. There can be little doubt that in Roman Egypt radical partible inheritance was the norm and that its principle was never called into question. None of the law-suits whose reports survive on papyrus refers to such a thought. If the principle had been questioned, we certainly would have heard it—the inhabitants of Roman Egypt were not known for their restraint when it came to litigation. Without a written document deviation from the unwritten rules simply was not possible.

All the same, it is equally important to realise that the principle of radical partible inheritance was not some universal and timeless feature of Egyptian society. This is not the place to describe the development in detail, but it is clear that the rules of inheritance changed from period to period, though only slowly. The rules of radical partible inheritance as described above were a product of the development of Greek and Egyptian law into one body of Greco-Egyptian law, and belong specifically to the Roman period.[15]

Slow or not, if changes could occur, the question must be raised, if briefly only, about changes in the third century. More specifically: what influence did Roman law have on the principle of radical partible inheritance? After all, the promulgation of the Constitutio Antoniniana turned the inhabitants of the *chora* into Roman citizens and thereby made them subject to Roman law, at least in theory. The effects of its promulgation in 212 are highly debated. That Roman law made only limited inroads into the *chora* seems generally accepted, but the question is where and to what extent such Roman influence can be detected.

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[15] See Taubenschlag (1955^2) 21-27.

The urban elites of the *metropoleis* were quick to embrace Roman law after 212. There are many references to Roman legal concepts, sometimes in odd places. However, the effects of the Constitutio Antoniniana on patterns of property transmission are difficult to determine. The forms of *testate* succession were certainly affected, but significant influence of Roman law on the patterns of *intestate* succession is impossible to determine because the Romans also practised a similar form of partible inheritance. The changes that can be observed concern form, not substance. References to the principle of equal sharing continue unabated.

Exploring Radical Partible Inheritance

The principles of radical partible inheritance seem straightforward enough. Each child receives equal shares, from both parents. Within marriage, the property of husband and wife remains separate. The elegance of these principles lies in their transparency. Maternal and paternal flows of property are kept completely separate. Yet the outcome is anything but transparent.

The consequences of radical partible inheritance are astonishing, and merit further exploration. Three different family trees might show the different scenarios. Each family tree contains a family with a fixed number of children in each generation. These family trees are in themselves schematic and demographically rather implausible, but they help in analysing three factors crucial for intergenerational continuity: the growth or decline of property, the growth or decline in family size, and property fragmentation. Each scenario starts with one couple in the first generation, and follows their surviving children for three further generations. Children are defined as 'surviving' if they marry and produce children themselves. The rationale of this definition is that the inheritance of surviving children *without* offspring would end up with their brothers and sisters. Starting with one couple in the first generation, each couple has one, two or three of such surviving children, who in turn produce the same number of children as the couple in the previous generation, and so on. From generation to generation, property is transmitted according to the rules of radical partible inheritance described above. The initial couple is allotted two units of land, each parent one. In each subsequent generation, each surviving child shares in equal proportion in the inheritance of both

his parents. Further, a situation of perfect isogamy is assumed: marriage partners are chosen who bring in exactly the same amount of property. So, if a child inherits property to the value of four units of land, he or she is supposed to marry someone who brings in four units of land as well.

For each of these three families, the situation has been sketched for four generations in Figures 2.3.1-3, the triangles representing men, and the circles women. Figure 2.3.2 shows the situation in which each couple in each generation produces two children. The amount of property remains the same in each generation, though fragmentation proceeds at a steady pace. Also, the family neither contracts nor declines (the off-spring belongs in equal measure to the family of the inmarrying partner). Thus, a couple owning 100 arouras (man and wife each 50 arouras), certainly wealthy but in a large town like Hermopolis of middling rank, would in each generation be able to produce a new property owner, owning the same amount (he himself 50 arouras, and his wife 50 arouras as well). This situation can be described as a state of equilibrium: neither the family nor the property grows or contracts. However, the equilibrium is not complete: fragmentation increases in every generation. Although the wealth remains the same, the units of property that subsequent generations own become smaller and smaller.

By contrast, in the sole heir scenario, sketched in Figure 2.3.1, each generation doubles its property, but the family also contracts each generation to half its previous size. In each generation, more property comes in the hands of fewer owners. Starting with a couple owning 100 arouras (man and wife each 50 arouras), their great-grandchild, in the fourth generation, would find itself somewhere at the top of the local elite; he and his wife would own enough property to qualify for the provincial, Alexandrian elite. The speed of the process is astonishing. Continued at this pace, members of the family would soon qualify for senatorial status. Remarkably, despite the concentration of property, fragmentation nevertheless proceeds at the same pace as in the family with two children.

In the scenario with three child families sketched in Figure 2.3.3, members own only two-thirds of the previous generation, while the family size increases by one and a half. At this pace, an elite family would very rapidly impoverish. With an initial holding of 100 arouras, a fourth generation couple would own only slightly less than 30 arouras. Again, what is astonishing is the speed of the process. Con-

tinued at this pace, a couple would soon own less than 10 arouras, the minimum amount of land necessary to feed a family. Independent of the process, fragmentation would proceed at the same pace as in the examples above.

It should be said most emphatically that these three family trees by no means form an accurate description of the experience of elite families in Hermopolis, Oxyrhynchos or any other *metropolis*, and not only because no local family seems to have entered the imperial aristocracy. The model is far too crude to resemble reality. The chance that each generation produced exactly the same number of children will have been close to zero. However, the virtue of exaggeration is that it brings out the major tendencies more clearly.

What are these tendencies? In the first place, the family trees illustrate that there is an inverse correlation between family size and size of the shares. The larger the number of surviving children, the smaller the size of their shares in the inheritance. And vice versa: the smaller the number of surviving children, the larger the inherited property.

The inverse correlation between number of children and size of the inheritance is well known, if only because it underpins any system of partible inheritance. The crucial weakness of such inheritance systems is that parents hardly have a say in how many children survive. There may—perhaps—have been indirect ways to limit the number of births, but there hardly was a way to prevent death and disease. As was argued in the previous chapter, mortality reaped at such a pace that it would have been risky indeed to place one's bet on a sole heir only. There then would have been a high likelihood that the family died out. In a stationary population (a population that exactly reproduces itself), the *average* number of surviving children would have been two. However, it is important to remember that this is an average only. In practice any outcome between nought and, say, five surviving children would have been possible. The more children, the smaller the share of each. Children could only hope that their siblings would not survive.

More can be concluded, however. Counterintuitively, fragmentation proceeds independent of the number of children. Fragmentation simply depends on the number of generations through which the property is transmitted. Independent of whether property increased, declined or remained stable, each act of transmission splits up the property further. In the family trees, each fourth generation couple in each family ends up with eight shares.

FIGURE 2.3.1 ONE-CHILD SCENARIO

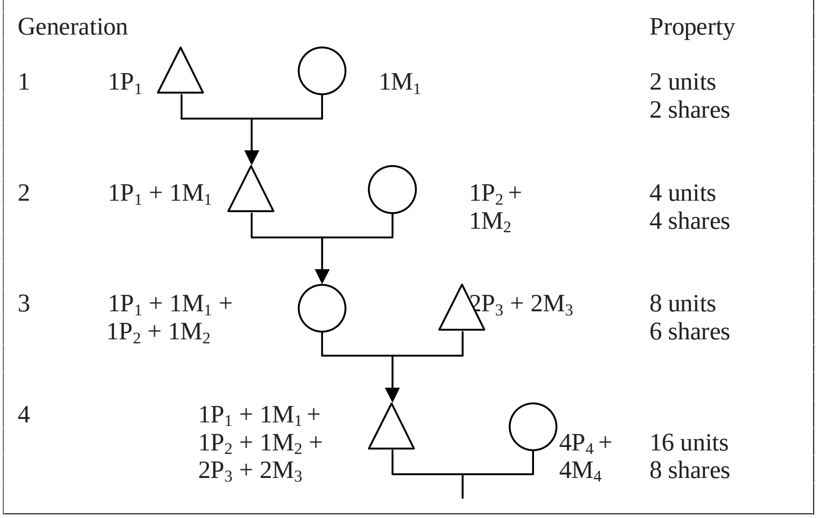


FIGURE 2.3.2 TWO-CHILDREN SCENARIO

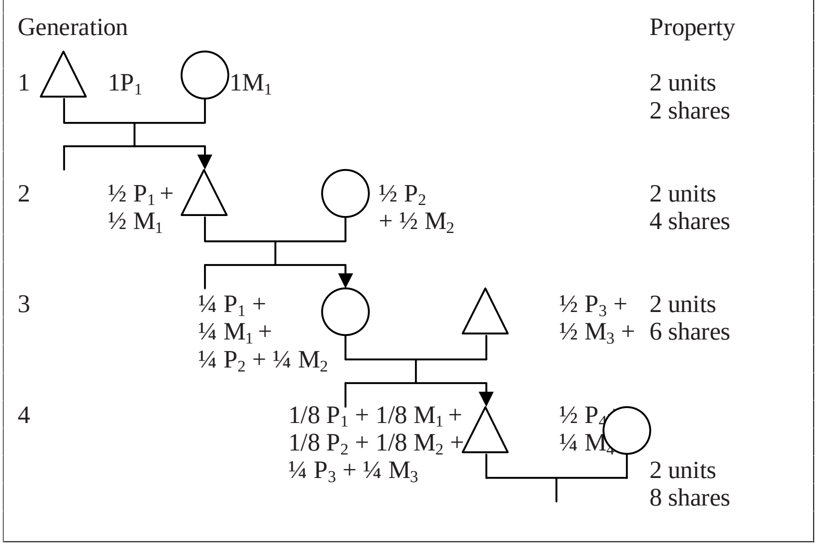
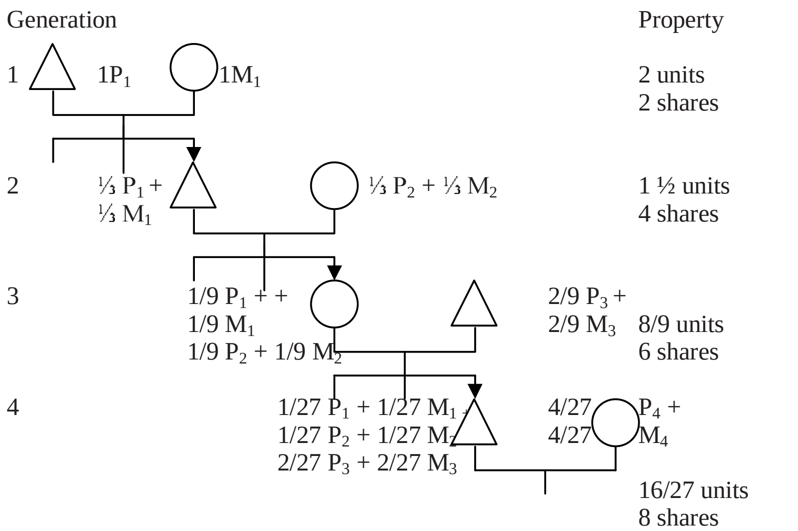


FIGURE 2.3.2 THREE-CHILDREN SCENARIO



Further, radical partible inheritance operates independent of gender. In the family trees, the symbols for men and women can be substituted without any difference in outcome. It does not matter whether a couple produces three sons, two sons and one daughter, one son and two daughters or three daughters. The inheritance is and remains split into three equal parts.

The corollary of the fact that radical partible inheritance operates independent of gender is that marriage forms no remedy. If a situation of perfect isogamy is assumed, the in-marrying partner cannot compensate for a loss or an increase in wealth. Rather, by pairing his or her property with that of the inheritor, the partner strengthens already existing tendencies. An impoverished groom cannot make up for the deficit in status by marrying a rich bride.

Lastly, what the family trees cannot visualise are differences in timing, which in the demographic regime of third-century Egypt *were* gender-specific. Given the differences in age at marriage between men and women, it was certainly not an academic possibility that the inheritances of a couple came at four different moments. Because of the age gap between the parents of both bride and groom, the maternal and paternal inheritance could come at rather different moments. However, because the new spouses themselves also married at differ-

ent ages, even if all the parents of a couple died at the same age, the chances were still high that inheritances came at four different moments. In consequence, there must have existed a structural fluidity in property holdings.

DOWRIES AND INHERITANCES

With respect to intergenerational continuity, it is remarkable how dramatic and rapid the effects of partible inheritance were. In cases where the number of surviving children was not two, the size of the couple's holdings could be drastically altered from one generation to the next. But how accurately do the family trees describe reality? Although there can be no doubt that radical partible inheritance was the basic principle in the transmission of property from generation to generation, one important qualification might be made.

That qualification concerns the role of dowries. As we saw in the previous chapter, marriage was universal, and it seems a safe inference that a dowry almost always accompanied marriage, certainly in elite marriages.[16] In some societies, dowries and inheritances were mutually exclusive. Receiving a dowry meant loss of the inheritance. Depending on the contents of dowries and the possibilities to transfer them to descendants, this might have affected general flows of property from generation to generation. What was the situation among the third-century elites?

At the outset, it should be stated that it is difficult to establish to what extent dowry-patterns were fixed. It is not absolutely certain that the relation between dowry and inheritance was enshrined in inflexible rules, nor whether these rules applied to testate and intestate succession alike. With respect to dowries, there seems to have been real room for manoeuvre.

Technically, dowries could consist of three parts. First there was the dowry proper, the *pherne,* by the third century increasingly equated with *proix.* This consisted of cash, jewellery and assorted objects, and was valued in money or weight. It never comprised real es-

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[16] The (non-elite) marriage contract between two embalmers in *P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3500 (3rd cent) is an exception, but seems to belong to a different, Egyptian, cultural sphere.

tate or slaves.[17] A *parapherne* could accompany the *pherne*, consisting of (unvalued) personal objects. A further addition could be made in the form of a *prosphora*, which could comprise land. However, by the third century both additions to the dowry proper had lost popularity. By this period, marriage contracts usually only mentioned a *pherne*, while only occasionally a *prosphora* or a *parapherne* is encountered.[18] For our purposes, it is thus the *pherne*, the dowry proper, that matters most.

The main purpose of such a dowry was not to transfer property, but to provide husbands with the means to support their wives. This is explicitly stated in the marriage contracts and can also be inferred from the contents of the *pherne*: never real estate or slaves, but cash, jewellery, clothing, furniture and so on, all specified in money or weight to ensure it could be returned to the givers.

Unsurprisingly, the parents of the bride, or other related persons who 'gave the bride away', usually provided the dowry.[19] The dowry went to the husband. Whether it remained under the absolute ownership of the woman is debated.[20] The husband could use the dowry, but had to act in the interests of his wife. In some cases the party of the bride held his property in security.[21] On death or divorce the dowry had to go back to the givers, or, when these were dead, to the wife herself, even when there were children.[22]

Little is directly known about the question where the dowry ultimately went after the death of both the wife and the givers of the dowry. The *prosphora* certainly became part of the inheritance.[23] It seems a reasonable inference that the *pherne* too was subsumed in the wife's property and went to the descendants.[24] Although dowries may not have served primarily to pass on property to subsequent genera-

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[17] Häge (1968) 141-142.

[18] Häge (1968) 14-15, stating that the *prosphora* is mentioned until 190 and the *parapherne*—at least in Egypt—until 230. A later attestation of the *prosphora* is now available in *P.Rain.Cent.* (1983) 64 (212-3) and of the *parapherne* in *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261).

[19] Though there are some cases where the bride herself provided the goods, even where the parents were still alive. See Rowlandson (1996) 155.

[20] Compare Häge (1968) 147 with Rowlandson (1996) 155-156.

[21] E.g. *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent.).

[22] See *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261) with Rowlandson (1996) 157 for a rather convoluted and interesting demonstration of the general principle.

[23] See *P.Rain.Cent.* (1983) 64 (212-3), a declaration of the intestate inheritance of the *prosphora* by two sons.

[24] Rowlandson (1996) 158-159 for the question and its probable answer.

tions and never went directly to the descendants, they ultimately seem to have ended up in their hands anyway. In that sense dowries did not inhibit the flow of property.

If dowries had some connection to the transfer of property, the question arises what the exact relation between a dowry and an inheritance was. Did a dowry exclude a woman from the inheritance? Mutual exclusion was certainly not the case, for that would imply that all female owners of real estate, who can be assumed to have usually obtained their property out of inheritances, had to make do without a dowry. That is most improbable, and in many cases demonstrably untrue. In wills dowries and inheritances occurred side-by-side.[25] Receiving a dowry certainly did not prevent a woman from a share in the inheritance.

Nevertheless, it seems likely that in one way or another, the dowry was subtracted from the size of the share. In a will of an Oxyrhynchite town council president the principle seems to have been one of indirect compensation.[26] The inheritance went to the five children, three sons, two daughters. Of the two daughters, one was married, the other still unmarried. In the will, the dowry of the married daughter was confirmed, while the three brothers had to pay the other dowry out of *their* shares. This happened despite the fact that both daughters also obtained property themselves. Some compensation between dowry and size of the share occurred, but only in an indirect way.

Indirect or not, it amounted to compensation. The larger the dowry, the lesser the share. If dowries did not contain real estate, and dowries were subtracted from the size of the share of the inheritance, it is of obvious importance to know how large dowries were relative to inheritances. The larger the proportion of the dowry, the less female real estate, and the more distortion of the patterns of radical partible inheritance.

Attested third-century elite dowries, incidentally all from Oxyrhynchos,[27] mention substantial sums. A woman from a distinguished family received as *pherne* golden objects to the weight of "17 minas less one quarter to the Oxyrhynchite standard", jewellery to the value of 1,500 drachmas , and 26,000 drachmas for additional *phernal*

[25] E.g. *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).
[26] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).
[27] It is likely that elite dowries in smaller *metropoleis* were significantly smaller, but that does not affect the arguments that follow, because the same applied to the size of inheritances.

goods, plus additions that included at least another 6,000 drachmas.[28] In the will just discussed, a president of the Oxyrhynchite council ordered his three sons to pay out of the inheritance a dowry of 24,000 drachmas for the one sister who was still unmarried.[29] Another elite dowry, discussed below in greater detail, seems to have consisted of 15,000 drachmas.[30] Another one is in the order of 18,000 drachmas.[31]

Such sums were significant, and represented small fortunes. At a third-century (pre-inflation) price of 500 drachmas per aroura, they would enable the recipient to buy 30 to 50 arouras of land. As ten arouras would suffice to feed a family, these were by no means negligible amounts. However, there also can be little doubt that the size of elite inheritances was substantially larger.

In wills, the monetary value of shares was never specified, so any direct comparison with the values of dowries is difficult. Nevertheless, a contract in which both the size of the dowry and the value of the husband's estate are mentioned presents a relatively clear-cut case. The husband had died while serving in office outside his hometown. In the contract, the wife appointed a representative who was to go to Alexandria and register the inheritance. The inheritance, she stated, had to go to their son, but the dowry was to be subtracted first:

> In consequence of the lamentable news announced to me concerning the death of my blessed husband Achillion-Apollonios, son of Apollonios, while at his post of royal scribe of the territory of the Alexandrians, I agree that I have by this bond appointed you to go down to Alexandria and register with his excellency the *procurator usiacus* in my name on behalf of the son of myself and my said husband, and his heir, Aurelios Dionysios-Apollonios, gymnasiarch of the said city, who is still subject to the Laetorian law [a minor], all his [Achillion's] property, valued at two hundred thousand sesterces [200,000 drachmas]. And out of this estate I declare that my husband owes me from the dowry which was brought to him upon my marriage with him consisting of gold ornaments and clothing and other objects valued at two talents and 3,000 drachmai of silver [15,000 drachmas] …[32]

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[28] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261); this might not have been a *pherne*, though cf. Rowlandson (1996) 157.

[29] *P.Oxy*. 6 (1908) 907 (276).

[30] *P.Oxy*. 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.).

[31] *P.Oxy*. 12 (1916) 1473 (201).

[32] *P.Oxy*. 10 (1914) 1274 (3rd cent.) lines 5-19 (transl. ed.).

The text at this point becomes very fragmentary and mentions several other sums of money. However, even if these sums are all added to each other on the not very likely assumption that they still referred to the dowry, the value of the dowry fell short of the fortune of the husband by a wide margin.[33] If, as seems quite possible, the dowry remained confined to the 2½ talents mentioned above, it represented only 7.5% of the inheritance her son received from her husband. This concerned her husband's estate, not her own inheritance,[34] nor is it necessary that her husband had obtained the whole estate out of an inheritance. Nevertheless, it seems safe to infer that dowries were substantially smaller than inheritances.

To summarise, dowries in third-century Egypt differed from inheritances in more than one way. They were different in contents: instead of real estate they comprised movables. They also were not primarily meant for the transfer of property, although the contents may have ended up in the hands of descendants in the long run. Despite the differences, it seems likely that the dowry was compensated in one way or another with the size of the share of the inheritance. This placed women at a disadvantage: as their dowries comprised no real estate, they were likely to end up with less land, fewer houses, fewer slaves. This qualified the patterns of property transmission described on the basis of the principle of radical partible inheritance. However, the effects were not as disruptive as they may seem. If dowries were relatively small compared to female inheritances, the effects on property holdings cannot have been all that significant.

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[33] *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (3rd cent.) line 20: 2050 or 3050 dr. Line 22: 2 talents and unknown number of drachmas. Lines 23-24: 3 talents and unknown number of drachmas. The ed. pr. suggests (with much hesitation) that the sum in line 22 might be a repetition of the dowry, that in line 20 some addition, and that in line 23-24 the total of the two. In that case only half a talent (3000 drachmas) would have to be added at most—if it referred to the dowry at all.

[34] The size of her own inherited fortune remains unknown, though it is to be noted that under the situation of absolute isogamy sketched above, the sum of dowry and the woman's inheritance would by definition be the same as the value of the husband's inheritance.

TESTAMENTARY FREEDOM

No matter how flexible dowry arrangements were, dowries were comparatively insignificant in mitigating the effects of partible inheritance. The real flexibility to favour sons must have been somewhere else. Testation is an obvious candidate. It seems natural to assume that written transactions provided more freedom in the transfer of property than intestate succession. Yet this assumption needs to be analysed carefully. Exactly what freedom did testate succession provide, and, more importantly, to what extent did members of the elite use such freedom?

In theory, two types of documents could arrange the transfer of property to subsequent generations: the marriage contract and the will.[35] The former was the standard Egyptian document, the latter a Greek introduction. Both coexisted for long periods of time next to each other, but by the third century, the will had prevailed over the marriage contract. Marriage contracts were still being drawn up, but were deprived of the stipulations about the transfer of property that could accompany the dowry arrangements.

If the will provided the dominant mode of written property transfer, it is of obvious importance to know to what extent members of the elite made use of them.[36] The extent of testate succession does not lend itself to easy analysis. Estimating the proportion of testate to intestate succession from surviving sources is hazardous. Of course, intestate succession was frequently mentioned, and for the registration of inheritances the question was immaterial whether the property was acquired through testate or intestate succession. Nevertheless, intestacy had a much higher chance of remaining undocumented than testate succession. Many cases of intestate succession can only be inferred from the fact that siblings own equal shares—something not excluded under testate succession either.[37] As so often, the universe of surviving texts is not representative of social reality.

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[35] I regard the *donatio mortis causa* as a subcategory of the will. I know of no examples from the third-century elites. For references to the *donationes*, see P.J. Sijpesteijn, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 111 (1996) 163 n.5.

[36] See the classic discussion about the extent of Roman intestacy in Crook (1973) with further literature; further the brief comments and some more recent references in Johnston (1999) 51.

[37] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) demonstrates the point. Three children decide to leave the property of their deceased father for the moment undivided, to pay the costs of office of the youngest brother. It seems likely that they had obtained the inheritance

Quantification is impossible, but there can be no doubt that a significant proportion of all property transfers occurred through intestate succession.[38] It is also clear (if it ever was in doubt) that intestate succession was not confined to the lower regions of the property owning classes. It also occurred among the elite. For example, the councillor's wife who on her death left an inheritance of 200,000 drachmas had made no will. The inheritance went to her two daughters under the rules of intestate succession.[39]

It is futile to try to explain all cases of intestacy among the elite. All we know is that it happened, and only sometimes can we make guesses about the reasons. In some cases, we may assume that the family situation was so transparent that there was no need for a will. There must have been situations where there was little need for further regulation, for example where the surviving spouse could be assumed to supervise the proper transfer of property to the descendents. The latter might in fact have been the case in the text just cited, and might more generally have applied to cases of women who died before their husbands. Unexpected death might also explain a great deal. As was stated in the previous chapter, the capacity of members of the elite to die should not be underestimated.

No matter how we interpret the cases of intestacy, it nevertheless seems likely, for a number of reasons, that the use of wills was widespread among the third-century elites. The transmission of larger property holdings was accompanied by a correspondingly larger need for regulation. In the first two centuries the use of wills was already widespread and hardly confined to the rich and famous.[40] It seems reasonable to suppose that wills were even more common among the elite. Further, in senatorial circles, dying intestate was something frowned upon.[41] In the third century, with the advent of Roman law, such senatorial ideas may have added to favour testate succession. Although the point is beyond proof, it seems reasonable to assume that

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through intestate succession, but the possibility cannot be excluded that the father had made them heirs in a will without specifying the share of each.

[38] Taubenschlag (1955^2) 188-189. Rowlandson (1996) 145-148 with 316 table 9.

[39] *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237). For another example see *P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289). A case from the Alexandrian elite is discussed in el Abbadi (1975).

[40] This can be readily seen from the social profile of Oxyrhynchite testators. See for a convenient list Rowlandson (1996) table 8; to which *P.Wisc.* 1 (1967) 13 (2nd cent.) and *P.Col.* 10 (1996) 267 (180-192) should be added.

[41] Champlin (1991) ch.1 for the ideological imperatives among the senatorial elite.

members of the urban elite in the third century had a preference for testate succession.

The advantage of having regulated the transfer of property was also a potential disadvantage, however. Once committed to papyrus (or writing tablet), regulations could become easily outmoded. Estates could and did change in size and contents, and due to high levels of mortality family composition was also subject to change. Children could die; plots of land could be added to the estate. The solution seems to have been to revise wills frequently.[42] This is indirectly corroborated by the reports of opening—the usual way through which wills have survived. The time between composition and opening of wills was usually short, in the order of a couple of months.[43] It strains credulity to believe that in all these cases knowledge of impending death was so advanced; frequent revision is a more likely explanation.

Unlike intestacy where Roman influence is difficult to detect, testate succession among the elite was strongly influenced by Roman law, at least in form. Before the promulgation of the Constitutio Antoniniana in 212, most Roman wills found in Egypt originated from a military context, then the main source of Roman citizenship. After the promulgation of the Constitutio Antoniniana, the local elites seem to have been most responsive to the change. Things Roman were rapidly embraced. In consequence, quite a number of third-century Roman wills can be located in the milieu of the elite.[44]

Roman wills had to conform to two rules. They had to be written on wax-tablets and they had to be composed in Latin, at least until Alexander Severus' allowance to use Greek instead.[45] The former did not help their survival; the latter, judging by the many errors in spelling and grammar, formed a serious handicap for testator and scribe alike. Both generated a need for Greek copies written on papyrus. It is in this form that they have come down to us, quite often not as translations of the original texts, but as part of the report of the opening of the will.

[42] Champlin (1991) 64-70.

[43] *P.Lips.* 1 (1906) 10 (240) is exceptional: eight years lie between composition and opening.

[44] Of the third-century Roman wills listed in Migliardi Zingale (1988), nos. 23, 24, 26 certainly and no. 21 probably stem from elite circles, while in some others an elite context is also possible.

[45] For which see *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) 2n.

In form and content, these wills followed Roman rules to varying degrees. In many cases, the will cannot be classified as fully Roman, but there are some exceptions.[46] One famous case is the will *per aes et libram* opened in Oxyrhynchos in 222. Newly-created Roman citizens followed an old Roman custom: in the will, we meet a true 'holder of scales' and a 'purchaser of the household', who was to carry out the instructions of the will after the death of the testator:

> On the making of this will Aurelios Sarapion bought the household and chattels for one sestertius (acknowledged), Aurelios Theon being scale-holder.[47]

Even to a Roman audience this type of testamentary ceremony would appear old-fashioned, and one can only wonder how its participants in Oxyrhynchos would have perceived such a ritual. Being Roman cannot always have been easy.

However that may be, the question of the extent of Roman influence on testamentary forms is better left to legal historians. What matters for us is a different question. If wills were common among the elite, the real question is to what extent romanised wills provided testators with the freedom to dispose of property as they saw fit, and, more importantly, to what extent members of the elite made use of such freedom. As the degree of Roman influence varied from will to will, the question can only be answered on the basis of the wills themselves.

In the first instance, freedom seems to have been large. Testators seem to have had real freedom in making additional bequests to family and friends. So, Aurelia Serenilla made gifts to her husband, a *kosmetes*, and to her *curator*, a veteran, of at least 8 arouras of land and provided annual gifts of agricultural produce to a friend.[48] An unknown testator made provisions for his mother, for his wife, for his sister, for a former town council president related through marriage and for his steward.[49]

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[46] Compare *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.) with *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276).

[47] *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348 (224) lines 41-43 (transl. ed.), probably belonging to the milieu of the local elite—see *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229) line 2n. for possible identifications. For the testamentary form, see Watson (1971) ch. 2.

[48] *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 38 (bef. ca 260, cf. *P.Princ.* 3 (1942) 174).

[49] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.).

When one did not obtain what one was hoping for, serious disappointment could be the result. A Latin and Greek sample book of letters suggests that an odd and amusing literary genre came into existence, letters of condolence 'for those who received too little'.[50]

Making legacies was a way to honour friendship and network ties from beyond the grave. At a practical level legacies could guarantee that obligations would be fulfilled in a fitting manner; at a more symbolic level they created a way to express final and irrevocable judgments. This lends this type of bequest a certain volatility; decisions could be unexpected and people could be disappointed. However, it has to be realised that the freedom testators had in this respect concerned a relatively marginal portion of the estate. It would be a serious mistake to confuse it with the relatively fixed patterns of the transmission of the inheritance proper.

With regard to the inheritance proper, there was much less room for manoeuvre. The main purpose of a Roman will was to designate an heir or heirs. In theory choice was free. The institution of an heir would thus have provided absolute freedom to transfer property. In practice however, the children were usually the heirs. In the will of an Oxyrhynchite councillor and president, drawn up in 275, his five children were instituted as heirs:

> Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon, *exegetes*, councillor and president (in office?) of the shining and most shining city of the Oxyrhynchites dictated this will in Greek, according to the permission [i.e. of Alexander Severus, to use Greek instead of Latin].
>
> The Aurelioi Herminos and Horion and Herakleides and Ptolemais and Didyme, my five dearest children by my ... wife Aurelia Isidora-Priska, a matron wearing the stola, shall be my heirs according to the disposition written below in which each will receive [his or her share]. Let all others be disinherited.[51]

Disinheritance of children could occur, mainly because of misbehaviour, though it is hardly found in the third-century wills.[52]

Just as under intestate succession, in almost all wills the children were instituted as heirs, despite the theoretical freedom of choice.

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[50] *P.Bon.* (1953) 5 (3rd or beginning 4th cent.).
[51] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) lines 1-5 (transl. ed., with minor adaptations).
[52] The one possible case in *P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 38 (bef. ca 260, cf. *P.Princ.* 3 (1942) 174) was removed by Wilcken, see *B.L.* 4.

However, instituting children as heirs did not necessarily imply equality in sharing. Wills were used to designate specific pieces of property to specific heirs. In his will, Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon instituted his five children as heir and subsequently described the share of each. Nevertheless, even here the principles of equality were upheld. Some pieces of property were shared in equality between the three sons, and others in equality between the two daughters:

> To the Aurelioi Herminos and Horion and Herakleides my dearest sons I give and bequeath jointly in equal shares on behalf of my inheritance what I own near Istrou by the upper shrine of Isis: the vineyard and all corn-land and .... and utensils and all appurtenances and all corn-land I own near Sepho and in the *metropolis* my ... house and all the furniture in it.
>
> To the Aureliai Ptolemais and Didyme my aforesaid daughters … I give and bequeath likewise jointly in equal (shares) on behalf of my inheritance the vineyard I own at … jointly with the said … and all corn-land and the plant and utensils and all appurtenances.[53]

In other cases the principle of equality was not explicitly mentioned, but instead designated pieces of property were distributed to specific persons. In the absence of monetary specification, it is difficult to estimate whether such distributions were truly equal. On the one hand it is unlikely that absolute equality was achieved in this way: no piece of property was exactly the same. Even if the size of a plot was the same and the same crop was grown on it, it could be located at a less advantageous place than a plot that was in other ways similar. On the other hand it is important to realise that specification need not be incompatible with equality either. The advantage of distributing specific pieces of property to specific persons was obvious: further fragmentation of the estate was avoided.

As we already saw, such divisions could be gender-specific. To what extent did women receive fewer, or different, goods than they could expect under intestate succession? Analysis is difficult, because neither the monetary value of the share nor the size of the dowry relative to the share is stated in the wills. We have to rely on impressions. Some scholars have suggested that women might have received dif-

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[53] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) lines 7-10 and 11-13, respectively (transl. ed.).

ferent goods,[54] but such a tendency is not clearly visible in the available evidence about the third-century elites.

Nevertheless, it is not an academic possibility that in many cases women received less than would be justified after subtraction of the dowry. In an inheritance dispute, a woman challenged the will of her father on the grounds that it had not been lawfully opened.[55] As the chances that she was interested in legal formalities are slight, the implication is that she would have received more under intestate succession than she did in the will.

Such discrimination has already been in evidence for a longer period. In theory, women in Egypt were in a much better position than their Mediterranean sisters. In practice, the differences were less marked. Apparently, there existed conflicting tendencies in testate and intestate succession. An ideology of equality competed with a wish to differentiate according to gender. Whether intentional or not, this placed sons in a better position.

One other practice, though not well attested, is of exceptional interest for our purposes. There are two cases where special provisions are made for the eldest son. In the will of Aurelios Hermogenes-Eudaimon, the eldest son obtained some specific corn land and an extra slave, 'alone, as his special property'.[56] In a contract of sale of a small plot of land, the four sellers, children of a councillor, stated that the eldest of them owned a double share while the others owned one fifth each.[57]

This practice has been interpreted as a remnant of a previous Egyptian inheritance practice in which the eldest sons obtained a double share.[58] As there is nothing in the Roman law of succession that hints at favouring the oldest son over the others, the interpretation might be correct, though in one of the two cases it is far from certain that the extras constituted a *double* share of the whole of the inheritance. Origin explains little, however. Its recurrence in a third-century will is remarkable, for in the previous centuries it is not attested. Whether Egyptian or not, it is very tempting to associate the recur-

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[54] Hobson (1983).

[55] *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3117 R° (235), not necessarily belonging to the milieu of the elite. The text is much damaged and, as the editors warn, based to a large extent on conjecture, but there can be little doubt about the general argument.

[56] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) lines 10-11.

[57] *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 6 (250) lines 4 and 12 (with *B.L.* 8).

[58] Kreller (1919) 149-154.

rence of the practice with issues of succession. Primogeniture was never an option, but by bestowing favours on the eldest son, he would be better placed to follow in his father's footsteps. It might be of relevance that in both cases the number of surviving children was relatively high.[59]

To summarise, testate succession must have been frequent among the elite. At least in form wills were Roman. In theory, they provided greater freedom than was possible under the rules of radical partible inheritance. However, actual freedom was located in the place where it mattered least: in bequests and devises to friends and family. The institution of an heir provided absolute freedom in theory, but the recurring pattern was to divide the inheritance among all children. Sometimes, even here property was shared equally; but another and attractive option was to assign specific pieces of property to specific persons. With respect to equality, two deviations might be detected—neither dominant nor clearly visible. Firstly, sons and daughters were treated as separate groups, quite possibly to the benefit of the former. Secondly, eldest sons might have been favoured over the other sons and have been endowed with extra property.

Partible inheritance clearly remained the norm even under testacy. The force of social imperatives was very strong, apparently. However, testation offered ways to mitigate its radicalism. Favouring sons over daughters, and favouring the eldest son over the others could increase the chances of social succession. In that respect, testacy offered an instrument adaptable according to circumstances.[60]

Conclusion

Property transmission was of vital importance for elite formation and social reproduction. The central argument of this part of the book is that elite families were subject to cyclical mobility. The contingencies of the demographic regime coupled with the social imperatives governing property transmission make it likely that both strong upward mobility and strong downward mobility occurred over the generations. Some families rose to prominence, while others fell into oblivion or even died out. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this

[59] I owe this observation to Wim Jongman.
[60] Cf. Saller (1994) 155f.

was partly due to the unpredictable nature of demographic reproduction. Whether a member of the elite would have a surviving son available to succeed him was to a large degree a matter of chance. However, it was also due to the patterns of inheritance prevalent in third-century Egypt.

There can be no doubt that partible inheritance was underlying all intergenerational transfers of property, both testate and intestate ones. In cases of intestacy, radical partible inheritance coupled transparency of principle with a chaotic outcome. A couple could inherit at four different moments. With each intergenerational transfer, fragmentation increased. Partible inheritance all too easily led to changes in wealth over the generations. Dowries did not fundamentally change these patterns. Testate succession offered some mitigation: sons could be favoured over daughters, and, less clearly, eldest sons over the other sons. However, social imperatives governed written documents to such an extent that it is misleading to draw the distinction between testate and intestate succession too sharply. Both in legal and in social terms, there were clear constraints. The nature of the laws of intestate succession might have been too simple to answer all needs of testators, but testate practices seem to have been not far removed from the rules for intestacy. When it came to the main components of the property holdings, there surely was no absolute freedom to dispose of them.

In consequence, too few children might easily have led to extinction of the family line, too many to the splitting up of resources. There was always a risk that sons ended up with too little to support an elite life-style. In theory, families had to steer a middle course: too few children meant a high risk of dying out, too many the risk of a decline in wealth. In practice, couples had only very limited means to control the number of surviving children. From generation to generation, the number of surviving children shifted. This will have affected not only their means to pay whatever obligations members of the elite have had, but will also have had repercussion on their status. Either wealth determined social status much less than we usually think, or the extent of social mobility was much larger than is usually supposed. Economy of hypothesis makes the latter much more likely.

PART TWO CHAPTER FOUR

CONTINUITY AND RENEWAL

THE FAMILY OF SARAPION-APOLLONIANOS

In the previous chapters the family of Sarapion-Apollonianos has been mentioned occasionally. It was a well-known Oxyrhynchite family that belonged to the regional elite. The family has an impressive record. Its history can be traced back for at least five generations.[1]

Gymnasiarchs (heads of the gymnasium) can be found in all five generations. After the institution of the councils in 200, all generations contributed councillors. In at least two generations, people made it to *strategos* (head of a nome)—the summit of a local career. In the first generation, Sarapion-Apollonianos was a local gymnasiarch. In the second generation, his son and namesake was not only member of the council at his hometown Oxyrhynchos, holding several magistracies, but he had also been royal scribe in the Hermopolite nome and became *strategos* twice. A generation later, one of his sons, Aurelios Spartiates-Chaeremon, had been gymnasiarch, member of the Oxyrhynchite council, and *strategos* of the Hermopolite nome. His daughter married in the fourth generation someone whose brother was a member of the local council, while the son of this couple in the fifth generation held the gymnasiarchy already during his minority.

Families like those of Sarapion-Apollonianos are usually taken to be representative of the local elites. These elites, so it is thought, consisted of a limited number of families that stayed in power for generations on end. They closely guarded their privileged positions. Through intermarriage they established ties with each other. As a consequence of the fact that children inherited the wealth and power of their parents and married with children of families of similar wealth, these families formed a closed group, with little room for outsiders. The possibilities for social mobility were severely restricted.

[1] Moioli (1987), replacing earlier work cited there.

There are as we will see more examples of families like those of Sarapion-Apollonianos. We encounter them not only in Oxyrhynchos, but also in Hermopolis, in Arsinoe and in less-known towns like Pachnemounis in the Delta. But were they the norm? Should we imagine the urban elites to have consisted of a series of such families, all with imposing genealogies, all with continuity in office holding?

In the light of the arguments about cyclical mobility presented in the previous chapters, it will be clear that this can hardly have been the case. Families like those of Sarapion-Apollonianos were not average elite families. For every family with a continuous history of elite membership many others should be posited that were less successful. Lack of continuity must have been widespread among the elite. A demographic regime with high mortality and high fertility created volatility, while radical partible inheritance easily led to fragmentation of wealth. In consequence, many families must have been unable to remain among the elite for more than one or two generations. They became impoverished and could not sustain their life-style, or they simply died out.

However, it would be too easy to relegate families like those of Sarapion-Apollonianos to the realm of exceptions and leave them there, without further analysis. We should not jump to conclusions on the basis of deterministic arguments and regard such families as nothing more than the winners of the demographic lottery. In the end, it is intellectually unsatisfactory to assume that members of the elite remained mere passive victims of the contingencies of the demographic regime and the rules of partible inheritance. The capacity of such families to remain in power should not be underestimated. Their examples are certainly of interest, and their existence warrants closer analysis.

Similarly, lack of succession is also of interest. There can be no doubt that intergenerational discontinuity must have been widespread among the elite. But can it be found in the sources? *Proving* the absence of continuity in the sources is difficult. For how can we know that a family dies out and that the silence of the sources is not simply the product of the haphazard patterns of survival?

Lastly, if elites were not, or not solely, composed of a few dominating families, the corollary is that others filled their places. Mobility must have been larger than is usually supposed. It is of obvious importance to know who the new entrants were. Is it possible to estab-

lish that new candidates were recruited from specific groups, for example from descendants of veterans or freedmen?

The aim of this chapter is therefore to investigate succession in more detail. What do the successful families we know from the sources teach us about historical reality? Is it possible to find discontinuity in the sources? Who filled the vacancies? Are the social risers to be located among specific social groups? And if not, how should mobility be envisaged?

Continuity

The family tree of Sarapion-Apollonianos has already been mentioned. Such family trees suggest that at least some elite families managed to remain in power over a longer period of time. But for how long and for how many generations?

Prosopographers have sought the answer in family reconstruction. By patiently reconstructing ties between family-members it becomes possible to obtain insight in patterns of continuity. Most documents mention only few persons, but through their father's names connections can be established. The more often a person is mentioned, the larger the possibilities become to obtain an idea of the family.

Examples, however, are not as abundant as seems to be suggested by the prosopographical studies. The best example of a purely local family postdates the third century. A Hermopolite elite family, best known through the activities of the wealthy landowner Aurelia Charite, is attested for four generations. Through the survival of her archive, we learn much about her family. In all four generations multiple signs of elite membership can be found.[2] Evidence for another fourth-century family with four generations of elite membership, this time from Oxyrhynchos, has surfaced in recent publications.[3] In the third century, a much smaller Arsinoite family of magistrates and councillors shows elite membership for three generations.[4] In yet another case, three children, the men councillors themselves and the

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[2] See *P.Charite* (1981) introduction and *C.P.R.* 17a (1991) p.65 (resulting in slightly different stemmata). Cf. *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 5 (304), reed. *Analecta Papyrologica* 13 (2001) 81-90.

[3] See Appendix on Aur. Ioulianos-Dioskourides, with the references cited there. Much still remains uncertain; the evidence concerns a limited number of persons.

[4] The family is only known through one text: *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221).

woman married to another councillor, not only have a father as councillor, but also a maternal great-grandfather who carries the same title.[5] More such examples could be given, some of the families belonging to the regional elite,[6] others to the local elite.[7]

Prosopography is not as successful as one might think. The evidence from names is often tenuous, and much depends on arguments from probability. Take the evidence from Oxyrhynchos, which has been set out in the Appendix. For example, Aur. Achillion s. of Kornelianos, president, might be the father of Aur. Kornelianos, president in 293/294. This would suggest that both father and son were president. But apart from the occurrence of the uncommon name Kornelianos, there is nothing further to corroborate the proposed identification. Another case is that of Apollophanes, *exegetes* and councillor. He has two sons: Aur. Theon-Kastor and Aur. Dioskourides. Their names suggest a link with a man named Aur. Dioskourides-Kastor, gymnasiarch, councillor, and we may suppose on chronological grounds that he was their grandfather. Certainly possible, but hardly proven. Almost all the evidence depends on inferences of this kind. This is certainly no reason to stop with prosopographical research, but its limits should be kept in mind. Prosopographical research creates an unstable network of relationships of different degrees of probability, no hard evidence about elite continuity.

This also shows in the statistics. Out of 223 Oxyrhynchite councillors, only 6 (or 2.7%) are with a reasonable degree of certainty known to have had sons who followed in their footsteps. Three of these stem from the family of Sarapion-Apollonianos.[8] But this tells little about rates of succession, as in only 24 cases (or 10.8%) we know of the existence of sons.[9] Given the fact that the Oxyrhynchite elite is one of

[5] See *P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289), 557 (291) and related texts mentioned there. The family is discussed by Drew-Bear (1984) 316.

[6] Despite statements to the contrary by the editor, the second-century Tiberii Julii Theones of *P.Theon.* (1976) are not connected to the Gaii Julii Tiberii, for the latter obtained to judge by their names their Roman citizenship at a different date. The relationship between the family members of the latter family remains unclear. Bowman (2001) has attempted to unravel the complex prosopography of the family of the Kalpournioi, though much must remain uncertain.

[7] Nielsen (1994) reconstructs the family members of a wealthy landowning lady. The fourth-century family of Hyperechios is discussed by Lewuillon-Blume (1988).

[8] Appendix no 49, 111 (?), 150, 157, 158 and 175; including ‘probable’ but ignoring ‘possible’ cases.

[9] Apart from the cases mentioned in the previous note, also Appendix no 8, 12, 39, 42, 44, 64, 82, 85, 92, 96, 97, 112, 114, 130, 136, 159, 167 and 221.

the best attested local elites of the Roman empire, the outcome is disappointing.

Patterns of survival are so haphazard that only the chance survival of family archives provides enough context for reconstruction. Such archives are very rare. In cases where they do not survive, far too much depends on naming-patterns. Making identifications is usually difficult because the names involved are common, because father's names are lacking and because titles are frequently omitted.[10] Identifications can only be accepted if multiple criteria are met simultaneously. The use of family reconstruction for the study of elite continuity is therefore more limited than is usually supposed.

The best source for elite continuity can be found somewhere else: in a small series of what might be called honorific genealogical inscriptions. These inscriptions were erected during a period spanning the reign of Marcus Aurelius to the third century. Four originate from Pachnemounis, a shadowy *metropolis* in the northern part of the Delta.[11] The origin of some other inscriptions is unknown; given their similarity some might equally originate from Pachnemounis, others might have been found in Alexandria.[12] The texts are not all structured in exactly the same way, but all have in common that they were erected by a magistrate who seized the opportunity to list his office-holding relatives, offering as long a list as possible of all his office-holding family members. In effect, the inscriptions were used to define and glorify the magistrate's position within the *metropolis* by sketching the continuous contribution of his family to civic life. Presumably erected in each other's vicinity, the inscriptions formed a telling public display of elite competition.

In the most spectacular case the dedicator listed 29 office-holding relatives, distributed over 4 generations.[13] Second best comes an in-

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[10] For a telling display, see the amusing mess of namesakes mentioned in line 4n. of *P.Oxy.* 63 (1996) 4383 (384). *P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4597 (294) provides some clarity.

[11] For Pachnemounis, see the references in Calderini and Daris (1935-1996) s.v. and esp. Hogarth (1904).

[12] *S.B.* 1 (1913-1915) 176 (Pachnemounis; 169-172); *I.Alex.* (1994) 29 (Alexandria?; 170 Kayser is right to point out that nothing points to a Pachnemounite origin (p.117), but the fact that the inscription contains Alexandrian, not local, office-holders is in itself not sufficient to infer an Alexandrian origin either, cf. some of the other texts); *I.Alex.* (1994) 101 (Alexandria?; 3rd cent.); *S.E.G.* 2 (1925) 870 (Pachnemounis; 169-172); *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 557 (Pachnemounis; shortly after 212); *S.E.G.* 12 (1955) 558 (Pachnemounis; mid-late 3rd cent.); *S.E.G.* 45 (1995) 2075 (Alexandria?; 2nd-early 3rd cent.).

[13] *I.Alex.* (1994) 29 (170). One person is mentioned in a fifth generation, but his

scription that mentions 16 office-holders in four generations. Some of them had even made it to the office of *strategos*.[14] In yet another one, 3 generations, son, father, and both paternal and maternal grandfather all had been *gymnasiarch* and *agonothetes* in Alexandria and were member of the sacred association of artists and athletes. They descended from further unnamed gymnasiarchs.[15]

Perhaps the erection of such inscriptions formed a local habit, peculiar to Pachnemounis and Alexandria. There is no real reason to assume that they could not have been erected in any *metropolis*, however. The fact that they have not been found elsewhere and the fact that most of them belong to the second, not the third, century might tell something about the peculiarities of the Egyptian epigraphic habit, but does not suggest the existence of regional or chronological variation in elite continuity. To all intents and purposes, the type of continuity found in the inscriptions may also be found among the urban elites of the *metropoleis* of third-century Egypt.

When the Pachnemounis inscriptions were found, their first editor remarked laconically that "[b]eyond its general revelation of the complete civic organization .. this text contains nothing else worthy of special remark except its mention of Pachnemounis".[16] In fact their interest goes much further than that, especially given the general paucity of honorific inscriptions in Roman Egypt. The inscriptions are noteworthy for the use of very precise technical terms for kinship relations, terms that are hardly found elsewhere.

Not in all cases is the information completely preserved, but together the inscriptions provide good evidence on kinship terminology. Presumably, those who presented their families included everyone they could possibly think of, so they allow an exploration of the margins. What were the limits of their imagination?

None of the dedicators reached back for more than four generations. Given the fact that members of the gymnasial class had no difficulty to trace their descent back for many more generations, it is possible that further descendants were not lost in the mist of time but simply had not made it into the elite. It is therefore tempting to interpret this as the actual limit of continuity. However, the situation is

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mentioning seems almost accidental.

14 *S.B.* 1 (1913-1915) 176 (169-172).

15 *I.Alex.* (1994) 101 (3rd cent.).

16 Hogarth (1904) 8, on what is now *S.B.* 1 (1915) 176 (169-172).

slightly more complex: with the fourth generation kinship terms dried up. For any ascendant of five generations back or more no kinship terms seem to have been available. The fourth generation formed the horizon; anything beyond that was out of reach. Therefore four generations did not form the limit of elite continuity, but the limit of the ancient imagination of what it was like to have a large family. Four generations therefore meant: extremely large.

The inscriptions thus almost automatically raise the question how continuity was defined. What is meant by a statement that a family was continuous for so and so many generations? As we will see, there are significant discrepancies between our modern reconstructions of ancient family trees and ancient perceptions of what was a family.

In the study of the Roman family outside Egypt, Roman historians have paid a great deal of attention to ancient concepts of the family, and more in particular, to the range of meanings attached to the Latin terms *familia* and *domus*. Also, they have written much about the extent to which the Roman family should be considered to be a nuclear family. One of the major arguments in both discussions has been that 'family' in the Roman world was a very fluid concept whose definition depended on context.[17] Given this argument, it is surprising that few studies address the concept of the family from the perspective of continuity. What do we mean, to repeat the question, when we say that such-and-such a family shows continuity over so many generations? It is as if family history is being practiced while ignoring that a family has a history.

First, at the risk of stating the obvious, one point needs to be made explicit. Any living member of the elite of Roman Egypt would have forebears for generations on end, all the way back to the beginning of manhood. It is therefore important to emphasise that it is not long family trees per se that we are looking for. No matter how impressive some of these family trees are, they merely show the quality of our sources, or the ingenuity of our prosopographical research, or the capacity of persons to remember their ascendants. In themselves the family trees have little meaning. What is at issue is elite membership.

This is of importance with respect to the gymnasial class. This class was created at the beginning of the Roman period and consisted of Hellenised inhabitants of the *metropoleis*. If a young man was to be admitted to the gymnasial class, his parents had to present a declara-

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[17] See Dixon (1992) 1-35, citing further key works.

tion showing his descent from the original members. Both on his mother's and on his father's side all fathers, fathers' fathers and so on had to be listed, all the way back to the first century, when the gymnasial class was created.[18] In consequence, surviving third-century applications (the last century such declarations were made) show exceptionally long family trees, in some cases of ten generations of forebears on both sides. Family trees like these form fascinating material, but they are not very relevant for the topic under discussion. The gymnasial class was a closed class, defined by descent, not by wealth. Its membership was certainly elitist in slant, but the gymnasial class did not constitute an elite in the narrower sense of the word. Whether by chance or not, none of the third-century gymnasial families whose declarations survive belongs to the elite proper.

Elite membership is therefore crucial. In the case of men elite membership is normally signalled by offices or titles. In the case of women, elite identity is more difficult to determine. Women usually showed their elite membership by pointing to elite fathers, not by using markers of elite status themselves. Offices were and remained a male preserve.

The role of women is more complex in fact. The problems are not limited to the question whether a woman's own elite membership was advertised or not. For issues of continuity, the question is crucial how marriage was perceived. Would a daughter after marriage still be considered to belong to her original family, or would she be thought to have become part of that of her husband? If daughters through their marriage left their original family, a family with only daughters would technically become extinct. If she was somehow thought to remain part of her original family, she had the capacity to continue the family-line.

Given the ambiguous status of women in Roman Egypt, the question is not easy to answer. It certainly cannot be answered on theoretical grounds, for there are opposing considerations. On the one hand, marriage was virilocal: there can be no doubt that after her marriage the wife moved into her husband's household or that of his family.[19]

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[18] See Nelson (1979) for a discussion of the structure of the declarations—though without any further analysis.

[19] For the latter possibility, it is important to realise that a man might have not set up his own household before his father died—see the case of the councillor and high priest Ptolemaios s. of Damarion in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.), who tries to escape from a liturgy on the grounds that he is of modest means as he still lives in

The *ekdosis*, the giving away of the bride to the husband's family, implies this.[20] There can be little doubt that this physical transfer implied that she was considered to have become part of her husband's family. On the other hand, even if we leave dowry arrangements aside, the rules of inheritance discussed in Part Two Chapter Three turned her into a property owner in her own right. It might be argued that she was tied by her inheritance to her original family and, more importantly, that her capacity to transmit her property to her children without interference of her husband or his family made her children at least partly the continuators of her original family as well. Her position might therefore have been ambiguous.[21]

The honorific genealogical inscriptions from Pachnemounis and Alexandria previously discussed provide some insight into the position of women in this respect. The family was defined in the inscriptions in terms of honorific offices. As office-holding was a male prerogative in Roman Egypt, the inscriptions present a masculine kinship universe: women remain unnamed. Even in the inscription that offers the record figure of twenty-nine family members, the name of the mother of the dedicator was passed over in silence.

However, what is quite striking is that the family members of the maternal line were included in the inscription. In the kinship terminology a differentiation was carefully made between the paternal and maternal branches of the dedicator's family, often using different terms for each side. What is also noteworthy is that it was only the

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his father's house: δέομαι ὑμῶν, οὐ δύναμαι. μέτριος εἰμι, παρὰ πατρὶ τρέφομαι, "I implore you, I cannot. I am of modest means, I am fed by my father". It is not known whether Ptolemaios was already married, but his councillorship points to an age of at least 25, which increases the likelihood.

[20] If further confirmation is needed for the third-century elites, male testators can be seen to make provisions for the housing of their wives, while daughters do not seem to inherit houses. If the parents of a woman still lived, she might return to her parent's house if her husband died; this seems implied in *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261). If the kinship-terminology is correctly used, the fact that in the personal letter *P.Ryl.* 4 (1952) 691 (late 3rd cent.), addressed to a councillor named Alexandros, greetings are given to Alexandros' daughter and her son suggests they live in his household. No husband is mentioned—presumably he is dead or the couple is divorced. All this provides an added reason to assume that in *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent.) Antinoite citizenship denoted primarily status, not actual residence; if not, the implication would be that the Antinoite man had followed his wife to Herakleopolis. I assume the same for the couple mentioned in *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 2 (247/248), despite the Antinoite character of that document.

[21] Perhaps it might be compared to women in *sine manu* marriages in Rome, where the same tension applies.

mother's family that was mentioned: not the family of the dedicator's wife (patterns of marriage and office-holding make it likely that the dedicators were married at the moment of the inscription's erection), nor the families of husbands of married sisters, nor office-holding relatives of wives of brothers, let alone those of further removed relatives.

The consequences are interesting. If it was the *mother's* family that was mentioned, the maternal branch would differ in the texts from generation to generation. In the next generation, what would then be the grandmother's family would again be left out of the inscription, while the new mother's family came in its stead. Offspring from a marriage would apparently be considered to continue both sides, but only for one generation. Marriage, in other words, served in the short run as a way to establish ties between two families. Daughters had their uses. However, in the long run it was only the paternal branch—the fathers and sons—that mattered.

That continuity was primarily defined along paternal lines can perhaps also be seen in naming patterns. No formal family name existed. Even the introduction of Roman citizenship did not change that, despite the fact that naming patterns did change through the universal addition of Aurelios and Aurelia. Because of the non-existence of family-names, continuity hardly seems to have been an issue in the onomastic self-representation of the elite.

Further, as we have seen, in written texts titles often replaced the names of fathers and mothers in the names of members of the elite. Considerations of space can hardly have been an issue. Some titles were short and left ample room for additional information. Other titles were exceptionally long; it would not have been difficult to replace the less important elements with fathers' names. And when titles were shortened, no other information was given instead. It was membership of the elite, not the history of their family, that was important.

However, within families, repetition of personal names occurred on a very large scale. A name could be repeated over and over again, sometimes with the alias name as well.[22] Such names therefore effectively came to function as family names. Repetition of names thus provided some sense of continuity, though in a vaguer manner than a family name would do.

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[22] In a sense that is unremarkable, because alias-names were originally meant to provide the equivalent in the Greek language for Egyptian names.

In the most elaborate inscription of Pachnemounis, the frequency of homonymy is remarkable.[23] On the paternal side, six different family members carried the name Apollonios, three were named Alexandros, three Hierax and two Asklepiades. Somewhat more variety occurred on the maternal side, where Sarapion, Isidoros, and Hierax were all used twice. In the family of Sarapion-Apollonianos with which this chapter began the name Sarapion-Apollonianos passed from father to son for three generations, and then via a brother to a fourth generation. The name Spartiates occurs as part of a double name of both a father and a son. An in-marrying woman, Aurelia Dioskouriaina-Sabeina, undoubtedly had received the first part of her name from her father, Dioskourides. Epimachos, husband of her daughter, had a son named after him.[24]

It is not only the repetition that is interesting, but whose names were considered worth repeating. Onomastic succession seems to have been patrilinear to a large degree. Sons were often named after their father[25] or other members of the paternal branch of the family, most notably after their paternal grandfather.[26] The maternal branch played no role.[27] Daughters might sometimes have received part of their name from their mother,[28] but just as well from their father.[29] Egypt certainly was no bilateral society.[30] Continuity was onomastically defined in the male line; women counted for little. Marriage thus forged ties between two families, and could even for a generation cre-

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[23] *I.Alex.* (1994) 29 (170).

[24] Moioli (1987).

[25] For sons named after fathers among the Oxyrhynchite elite, see Appendix no 23 (partly), 24 with 150 (partly), 44 (twice, once partly), 48 (partly, uncertain), 64, 82, 85 (partly), 92 (partly), 99, 111 (both names but reversed?), 130 (partly), 157, 165 and 192.

[26] For sons named after their paternal grandfathers among the Oxyrhynchite elite, see Appendix no 42 with 74 (twice, once partly), 85 and 158.

[27] Among the Oxyrhynchite elite, there are no examples in the Appendix of sons named after their mothers. An interesting exception of matrilinear succession is formed by Appendix no 95, where a Hermias s. of Sotas, Alexandrian citizen and councillor of Oxyrhynchos is likely to have received his name from his *maternal* grandfather, who was also named Hermias. It seems more than coincidence that it was through him (and not through the paternal line) that the grandson obtained Alexandrian citizenship.

[28] For a daughter named partly after her mother see Appendix no 30 with 164; for a daughter named partly after her paternal grandmother, see no. 44 with 183 and for a daughter named after both parents no 124.

[29] For Oxyrhynchos, see Appendix no 20, 30 with 164, 58 (partly) and 124 (partly).

[30] Cf. Hobson (1989).

ate the impression that a child continued both lines. However, in the end continuity remained reserved for the paternal branch.

In reconstructing family-trees, prosopographers list any relative that they can find in the sources. This is perfectly legitimate, if only because it is difficult to think of any other research method. It has serious drawbacks for historical analysis, however. Not only are we at the mercy of the haphazard chances of survival—something every prosopographer is keenly aware of. It should also be given thought what the family trees prosopographers produce actually mean. What is presented as a single family often consists of multiple families. This applies especially to family trees that include many women. It is all too easily forgotten that daughters left their own family and married into a new one. In the family tree of Sarapion-Apollonios, Epimachos did not marry into the family, but his wife married into *his* family. Their son was therefore named after *his* father, and not after Sarapion-Apollonianos.

Marriage Patterns

Marriage might not have fostered continuity beyond the simple fact that it led to off-spring. However, it did help to forge ties between elite families. This clearly emerges from the fact that in the inscriptions from Pachnemounis the dedicator also included the maternal branch of his ascendants. As marriage formed one of the few ways in which elite families could influence their position in society, it is worth studying marital patterns in somewhat more detail.

Elite marriages were endogamous in a social and in a geographical respect. Most examples of elite marriages show spouses with a similar background, and where they do not, it is usually due to lack of information. What is more remarkable is that there are no marriages between elite families of different *metropoleis*. Members of the elite were so prone to mention their status that we surely would have encountered examples if they existed. There are a few cases of a marriage between an inhabitant of a *metropolis* and an Antinoite, but in all probability these are Antinoites living in the *metropoleis*. The possession of Greek citizenship must have formed an added attraction.[31]

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[31] *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent.) shows an Antinoite son of a magistrate and councillor of Antinoopolis married to a granddaughter of Herakleopolite council-

There is further quite a lot of evidence for marriage with Alexandrians, but it seems very likely that these Alexandrians again had a base in the *metropoleis*. Elite marriage, then, was by and large local.

The fact that no marriages occurred between families from different *metropoleis* but that marriages with local Alexandrians were frequent created a strongly hierarchical network. Ties with the regional elite were close in this way; ties with elites from other towns almost non-existent. Undoubtedly the limitation in choice of marriage candidates had to do with the competition between cities so well known from other parts of the ancient world. A connection with an Alexandrian was a marker of status, a tie with a member of the elite of a neighbouring *metropolis* was not done.

How this severely restricted marriage market functioned remains unknown. Women married at an age that leaves little doubt it was their parents who made the choice. Men married at an older age and hence might have had more of a say in the choice of their partner. However, it can be safely assumed that marriages were primarily used by families to create ties between them, and that the emotional considerations of the prospective spouses only played a secondary role, if at all. Negotiations undoubtedly had an informal character and hence have left no trace in the sources.[32] As the elite consisted of a restricted group marrying each other there must have been little freedom in the choice of a spouse. The pressure to marry a suitable partner must have been high.

Marriages were isogamous in that marriages occurred between people of roughly equal status. To what extent the isogamy was perfect remains more difficult to say. There is some evidence that could be interpreted to demonstrate unequal marriages. There is one case where the wife of a *kosmetes* was originally a villager.[33] There is another case where the wife almost certainly did not originate from an

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lors on both sides, she is presumably Herakleopolite as well. *P.Vindob.Boswinkel* (1942) 2 (247/248) has an Antinoite woman married to a Herakleopolite councillor, registering their 25-day-old son in Antinoopolis. For a marriage between an Oxyrhynchite magistrate and a woman from Ptolemais in the previous century, see *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3198 (145/146 or 170/171). Note that the document was found in Oxyrhynchos.

[32] See Montserrat (1996) 92. Bradley (1991) 183-185 suggests that in the case of the senatorial elite it was a much wider group within the family that discussed potential candidates, not just the parents. In the absence of evidence it is impossible to say whether this would have applied to the Egyptian elites as well.

[33] *P.Mich.* 9 (1971) 542 (bef. 212).

elite background.[34] A real reconstruction of such marital patterns is impossible, and much depends on interpretation.

Wives' names might give some indication. Most names are as Hellenised as one would expect.[35] However, others have an Egyptian ring. An Oxyrhynchite councillor and *agoranomos* first married a Tayris and later a Tanetbeus. The second wife of the testator of the testament *per aes et libram* briefly mentioned in the previous chapter was called Taseus—the Egyptian name is quite remarkable in the highly romanised context of the document.[36] It is tempting to interpret these wives with Egyptian names as persons of somewhat lesser status. But the argument is dangerous. The use of names depended on context and it is perfectly possible that in these cases the names were only partially preserved; the Greek alias may simply have been missing. Some names, in fact, consist of a combination of Greek and Egyptian elements.[37]

Further, there are some cases where one of the spouses does not carry titles (in the case of women, a patronym is given without titles). Only in one case can it be established with a reasonable degree of certainty that the absence of titles is real.[38] In other cases the titles of their fathers may simply have been omitted.

Strategies with respect to marriage provided a measure of freedom and individual choice in establishing ties with other elite families. This flexibility was important, and provided some compensation for the hazards of high mortality and the centrifugal effects of partible in-

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[34] Aur. Demetria-Tamaois, d. of Aur. Demetrios s. of Aur. Ammon and Didyme and of Tamaois, married to Aur. Melas s. of Melas, councillor in *S.B.* 20 (1997) 14681 (later 3rd cent.), assuming that the titles of her father would have been mentioned if he had them.

[35] E.g. Apollonarion (*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1473 (201)); Apollonia (mother and daughter in *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237)); Aristous (*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid 3rd cent)); Chairemonis (*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.) and *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1278 (214) (an Aur. Dionysias-Chairemonis)); Isidora (*P.Stras.* 6 (1971-1975) 555-556 (289) and *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) (an Isidora-Priska)).

[36] Tayris and Tanetbeus: *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3638. Taseus: *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348. Cf. also Taposiris (in Taposiris-Amazonion), wife of a Demetrianos s. of Ploution in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1542 (307) who may have been identical with Aur. Demetrianos s. of Ploution, magistrate and councillor of *P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293) and *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 26 (296).

[37] *S.B.* 20 (1997) 14681 (later 3rd cent.): Aur. Demetria-Tamaois, d. of Aur. Demetrios and Tamaois.

[38] *P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3139 (late 3rd-4th cent.), a divorce between a daughter of a gymnasiarch and someone without titles. This is hence an unequal marriage in which the *husband* is of lesser status.

heritance. However, after all is said and done, the possibilities to influence a family's fate in a radical fashion remained fairly modest. Marriage created ties, it did not foster continuity beyond the fact that it enabled reproduction.

Continuous membership of the elite was no doubt the ideal of all families participating in civic life. Only few families, however, managed to realise that ideal. No doubt there were more such families than we can find back in the sources. Our evidence is in that respect highly inadequate. However, the family-trees that have been reconstructed by prosopographers sometimes create misleading impressions. By listing all kinship relations indiscriminately it is easily forgotten that family-lines in the long run were only continued through the paternal branches. Marriage helped in creating local and regional networks, but did little to mitigate the effects of mortality and partible inheritance. Discontinuity must have been frequent.

DISCONTINUITY

It is this discontinuity that warrants further study. In the evidence, most families show membership of the elite only for a short time. That is to say, the great majority of attested magistrates and councillors remain unconnected to others. In Oxyrhynchos, out of a list of 223 councillors, only a handful of persons can be shown to have had family members who also possessed councillorship. The number of councillors without ties dwarfs the number of examples of continuous families discussed in the previous section. The degree of discontinuity in the evidence is in fact more striking than the fact that there are some continuous families. The question is how this imbalance in the sources should be interpreted.

Theoretically, the family line of every unconnected magistrate, every family for whom no further information is available, might be considered to have been terminated. Although this is just one of the views possible (and quite an extreme one), it helps to shift the burden of proof. Those who want to argue for widespread elite continuity have a lot to explain. The persistent lack of observable family ties forms a sobering corrective to overly optimistic assessments of elite continuity.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of the evidence along these lines should not be pressed further. Although it is tempting to adduce the

absence of observable continuity in favour of the arguments about cyclical mobility, there can be no doubt that the explanation should in the first place be sought in the quality of the sources. If attested rates of succession formed a reflection of actual succession, the implication would be that every generation would see an almost completely renewed elite. Even in the most radical assessments of the extent of discontinuity, this would strain credulity.

There can be little doubt that the fact that so little continuity can be observed in the sources is primarily caused by naming patterns. Normally a person mentioned in a text at least his or her father's name in a document. In some contexts, more information could be added, like the mother's name and the names of the paternal grandfather and maternal grandfather. Instead of all this information about the direct forebears, a councillor or magistrate listed his titles. Titles like that of councillor or magistrate came to replace the father's name. What we gain in knowledge about elite membership is lost in knowledge about family ties. Not even the fact that some councillors will have been brothers can be seen. The sources present us with hundreds of names of members of the elite that drift in a biographical vacuum. The lack of relatives may therefore mean anything or nothing.

In Oxyrhynchos, of only one in five councillors a patronym is known. The pattern seems the same elsewhere.[39] What governed the use of patronyms remains unknown. Possibly it simply depended on chance—if so, the implication is that the councillors with patronym form a representative sample of the complete group of councillors. It is also possible that only those councillors with relatively few offices (or none at all) would list a father's name, or perhaps councillors that were relatively young. It is therefore difficult to draw any conclusion on the basis of statistics of the group of councillors with father's name.[40]

No doubt there were many more elite families than we can see, no doubt some larger families of councillors lurk unnoticed in the sources and no doubt additional publications will show more family connections. However, no matter how much prosopographical effort

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[39] See Appendix: 45 cases out of 223 councillors = 20%. For other Middle Egyptian *metropoleis*, see Calderini (1951), for Alexandria, see the list in Delia (1991) appendix 6. The proportion of councillors with patronyms may have increased in the fourth century, see Bowman (1971) appendix 1.

[40] Only 6 out of 45 councillors with patronym mention a father who also has titles (13%). Again, it is an open question whether all would be listed.

is put into it, the great majority of members of the elite is bound to remain unconnected. Even in Oxyrhynchos, where we know a high proportion of names, and where the number of attestations keeps increasing, establishing ties remains difficult. The implication is that rates of continuity and discontinuity cannot be deduced from the sources.

It is therefore of some interest to show discontinuity in the sources. Beyond the lack of connections in lists of elite members, actual discontinuity is in fact hard to demonstrate. Hardly ever are historical actors so kind as to leave a note for posterity that they are dropping out of the elite, let alone that they are dying out—and certainly not among social groups where continuity formed the ideal.

In some cases, some indication may be given by the fate of their property. Property accrued to the fisc if there were no heirs. But this happened only to some discontinued families. There had to be no heirs, but the heirs encompassed a wider circle than the immediate household. In the absence of children property went to siblings. Only if these were no longer available would the fisc come into view. Further, the rule only applied to cases of intestacy. It was relatively easy to write a will and institute heirs. In fact, members of the elite were supposed to use that possibility. Cases of intestacy without heirs will have been relatively rare.

Conversely, not all cases where property accrued to the fisc need to imply that the family had died out. Property could also be confiscated for other reasons. These remain unknown to us: they might have been political, though that would probably only have applied to the most important families, and they might have to do with the impossibility to meet obligations, for example obligations related to office holding.

In many of the cases of confiscation of elite property, we can only guess at the reasons.[41] One relatively certain case is presented by an Alexandrian family owning enormous holdings in the Arsinoite nome, whose estate ended up in the hands of the fisc. Presumably nothing dramatic had happened, but the family had died out.[42] However, there is also a case of an Oxyrhynchite man, part of whose estate was con-

[41] In the house-register *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235), some of the uninhabited houses belong to the fisc. The reason remains unstated.

[42] Rathbone (1991) 52 (though warning that speculation is idle).

fiscated despite the fact that he had a son and grandson. Some other reason must have prevailed in this case.[43]

We are on somewhat firmer ground in observing downward mobility. Occasionally sons mention the titles of their father without carrying a title themselves.[44] In some cases, it is possible that these sons were still under age, or, more generally, that they would acquire an office only at a later date. In a register of ephebes from Leontopolis in the Delta, some ephebes have office-holding fathers. The fact that they do not hold offices themselves is surely to be explained by the fact that they were relatively young.[45] In other cases it is the composition of the family that suggests they were simply too young.[46]

There are also cases where we are clearly dealing with adults. A son of a *kosmetes* was married and had a daughter, which suggests that his age was above 20 or so.[47] A son of a (deceased) Antinoite councillor acted as witness and hence was presumably adult. He mentions no titles of his own.[48] In another case, an Antinoite husband had at least three children. His deceased father had been councillor and magistrate; he himself was not. The father of his wife had no titles, whereas both her paternal and her maternal grandfathers had been councillor and magistrate.[49] Another man, married to an Antinoite wife, is 45 years old and carries no titles, despite the fact that he is the son of a former high priest of Arsinoe.[50] Another son of a high priest is proposed as a guardian, and hence was presumably adult as well. He has no titles either.[51] A recipient of the corn dole, aged 20, had a

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[43] *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 70 (272/273 or 278/279) with *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3565 (245).

[44] Hagedorn (1990) is fundamental for the technical aspects of the onomastics.

[45] *S.E.G.* 40 (1990)1568 (220). The ephebic state may of course have marked the transition to (office holding) adulthood.

[46] In *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276) two of the three sons of the president of a town council were still minors, we may assume that the oldest son was also relatively young and hence had not held offices. In *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3638 (220) a half-sister is not yet of legal age; her half-brother is certainly an adult but might have been still relatively young. Their father is former *agoranomos* and councillor. In *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247) only one son is councillor; the other two were probably too young.

[47] *P.Amh.* 2 (1901) 96 (213): he might have been too young to qualify for the council, but that does not apply to magistracies.

[48] *P.Vindob.Bosw.* (1942) 2 (247/248) lines 6-10.

[49] *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent.). Strictly speaking it is only known that the wife has three or more children, but given the lack of female remarriage we can safely assume her husband was their father.

[50] *P.Hamb.* 1 (1924) 15 (209).

[51] *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2710 (261).

maternal grandfather as councillor and *kosmetes*, whereas his father and paternal grandfather had no titles. The fact that he was himself a recipient of the corn dole also suggests downward mobility.[52] A grandson of an *agoranomos* became apprentice of a weaver. Neither he nor his father had any titles.[53] A son and daughter of an Oxyrhynchite high priest and councillor received rent for a camel-shed; their father had been magistrate some 30 years before and was dead by the time of the document; we may presume his children were adults.[54] In yet another case, both the husband and the father of a woman carried no titles, despite the fact that several other family members on both sides did. She had the right of children and we may hence presume that both her husband and her father were long past the age for eligibility to the council.[55] More such examples could be given.[56]

Statistics may be absent, but such examples show that cases of downward mobility can be traced in the sources. In individual cases, inferences may be incorrect: sons may be younger than they appear, someone may have obtained an office later in life, titles may have been omitted. However, there are enough examples of sons who do not seem to have followed in their father's footsteps to support the idea that downward mobility did occur. Their relatively high number is certainly congruent with the postulated lack of continuity.

It is also useful to discuss causes of discontinuity in a more theoretical vein. High mortality and the partibility of inheritance militated

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[52] *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2935 (ca 268-271), lines 5-8: A........., s. of Sarapion s. of Horion, mother Sarallion(?) d. of ....nios-Sara(pion?) *kosmetes*, councillor, aged 20. The passage is fragmentary but the lack of titles is certain. For the corn-dole recipient himself, councillorship was still out of reach at age 20, but offices were not. Though the status of the recipients of the corn dole is somewhat unclear, there can be little doubt that it was no elitist institution. In the corn dole archive, members of the elite are invariably found as adminstrators, not as recipients.

[53] *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2586 (264), discussed at greater length in Part One Chapter Three. The apprentice was of course relatively young, but even for minors offices were not out of reach.

[54] *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 964 (263) with the family reconstruction presented in the Appendix s.v. Aur. Aristion, high priest, councillor.

[55] *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 279 (2nd half 3rd cent.).

[56] See also *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1693 (bef. 273 or 279) for a son of a councillor leasing out a courtyard; *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 908 (199), where a man and his paternal grandfather carry titles but the father does not and *B.G.U.* 11 (1966) 2118 (223) with *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 909 (225) for a son of a councillor involved in economic activities. Cf. *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2711 (271) for an Oxyrhynchite councillor and magistrate claiming that the three children of his deceased nephew are utterly destitute. Rhetoric perhaps, but perhaps reflecting serious problems.

against continuity. This resulted in the disappearance of some elite families and in impoverishment for others. Sooner or later, the latter led to downward mobility, presumably occurring in the next generations. Would there have been possibilities to avert the risks?

One possibility to cope with such risks would be to privilege the eldest son. In the previous chapter, we have seen that there was a tendency to allow the eldest son an extra share in the inheritance. However, there can be no doubt that partibility of inheritances remained the norm. Offices were also distributed over all sons. Primogeniture, in whatever form, never became an option. That this was the case can be seen in the arrangements provided by an Arsinoite family, which show how families coped with the problems. After the death of their father, the three children that survived him drafted an agreement.

> An agreement has been made between Aurelios Agathodaimon-Neilos surnamed Hermias, ex-gymnasiarch, councillor (?) of the city of the Arsinoites, about forty years old, and Silvanos about twenty-four years old with a scar on the … side of his forehead, and Didyme about thirty-three years old without scar with the guardian given her according to the Roman customs [*space left empty for a name*], all three children of Horion, ex-gymnasiarch, … and former (=deceased) councillor of the city of the Arsinoites, son of Neilos-Hermias, former gymnasiarch … in as much as one of them, Aurelios Silvanos, has been elected by the most excellent council in the current year 5 in the month of [*space left empty for a month-name*] to the office of [gymnasiarch?] of the city, and has come forward and claimed that, in the way in which his aforementioned brother Hermias and … his deceased(?) brother Horigenes ex-gymnasiarch and councillor of the same city filled the same magistracy, the expenses being borne(?) by his father who was then still alive, so in this way he too ought to fulfil the aforesaid magistracy to which he has been elected … the expenses being borne by all the property his father left(?); now in accordance with this agreement because of their concern for the well-being of one another the three of them have agreed that … all the property left to them by their father is to remain undivided(?), and from the proceeds ... after deducting(?) the taxes in kind and in money on the property and the cost of … to the expenses of the magistracy and … Hermias and Didyme have jointly loaned to Silvanos (a sum of money?) the debt to be repaid after deduction(?) of the expenses of the magistracy from the said property ... and it shall not be possible for any of them to

> transgress any of the terms since they have made the agreement with one another on these terms.[57]

Arrangements like these imply that the major concern was the complete equality between the children—in this case the concern was shared by the children as well. The youngest son was not to be at a disadvantage: he did not have to pay for the office out of his share of the inheritance. It is also noteworthy that the offices were distributed over all sons. The implication of such arrangements is that there would be little room for radical measures to counter the effects of partible inheritance. Social imperatives were too strong: they dictated an equal distribution of benefits and burdens.

What would have helped was plain wealth. To be sure, demography and partible inheritance had the same impact on all layers of the elite. However, those who were on the threshold of the elite were much more vulnerable. By contrast, at the top of the elite the amounts of wealth were so large that fragmentation would not immediately endanger one's position. Such families also had more power to avert the worst consequences. It is therefore intrinsically likely that the wealthier families had more possibilities to continue their elite membership than the poorer ones.

On theoretical grounds there is thus a greater likelihood that the continuous families came from the top of the elite. The higher the status and wealth, the higher the chance of continuing elite membership. Although the argument that elite families dominated municipal life for long periods of time is misleading if it is applied to the whole of the elite, this does not mean that it is completely erroneous. While many of the elite families had short-lived histories, a few others could indeed dominate the elite for generations.

It should not be forgotten, however, that most elite families did not have so much wealth. In any pyramidal distribution of landholdings, the number of very wealthy owners was small by definition. This also applied to the internal differentiation within the elite. A high proportion of councillors will have owned property just above threshold level. They easily dropped out of the elite.

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[57] *P.Harr.* 2 (1985) 227 (221) lines 3-17 (transl. ed.); the text is very fragmentary and in some points obscure.

Renewal

In each generation, a significant number of elite positions must have become vacant because the families that had occupied them were unable to produce a new candidate. The obvious but important corollary is that persons from outside the elite must have gained entrance into the elite. The question is what the identity of these outsiders was. Should the newcomers be located in specific groups?

This question is directly related to the discussion about social mobility among the elite. The question to what extent the elites of the Roman world were open to outsiders has occupied ancient historians for quite some time, just as it has dominated the historiography about elites of other periods. Mobility was regarded as *social* mobility because it was thought that specific social groups gained entrance into the elite, groups with characteristics that set them apart from the elite. Attention usually focused on freedmen and their descendants. The debate centred on the question to what extent people of servile background were upwardly mobile and to what extent they were barred from the highest reaches of social life. However, a second group of potential risers, formed by those who originated from military circles, has also received a certain amount of attention. For according to some scholars, the encroachment of the military on civic life was substantial, and increased in time. It is not far-fetched to regard entrance of military men into the urban elite as a similar form of social mobility as that of freedmen.

An extensive body of literature has been written about the mobility of both groups, but strangely enough hardly ever has the advancement of the two groups been considered as part of the same issue. There were empty slots to be filled, and we may suppose that they were filled by those most qualified in terms of influence, status and wealth. The simple question is who these people were. Both persons with a servile and persons with a military background were qualified in theory.

Soldiers and Veterans

Let us start with the military men. What is at issue is the extent to which soldiers, veterans and their descendants gained entrance into

the elite. Is it possible to find veterans as magistrates and councillors? Should we expect their children to enter the elite?

Three preliminary remarks should be made. Firstly, it should not be forgotten that the army itself functioned as a major source of mobility. Although there was a clear distinction between soldiers and officers, auxiliary troops and legions, in all ranks and units impressive careers could be made. Secondly, especially in the higher echelons military men could exercise significant informal power on civilian life. The army presented a locus of power that could compete with that of the urban elites. Thirdly, a career in the army was not a career for life. Soldiers became veterans, and hence had to find new outlets for their ambitions. All this implies that military men were well-placed to take over any empty seats the elite had on offer.

In the *metropoleis* of third-century Egypt, there is some evidence for direct contacts between members of the elite and military men. We see an Alexandrian councillor lending money to a soldier.[58] The widow of a *kosmetes* sells a house to a soldier.[59] The evidence is not abundant, however. A pattern of structural contacts does not emerge. Military men appear to have had contacts with members of the elite, but so did many others.

The same applies to the much more important question to what extent the boundary between the civilian and the military was actually crossed: were there veterans who entered the urban elite? In the sources, there are only very few third-century examples of politically active men with a military background. The best example is formed by the well-known president of Hermopolis, Markos Aurelios Korellios, who was a former equestrian military officer.[60] There is one certain case of "an honourably discharged veteran, sometime *officialis* of the prefect of Egypt, former (=deceased) councillor of the most illustrious city of Alexandria".[61] His career remains unparalleled, however. There is one other possible case of a veteran and *archon* in Koptos, but this depends on a textual conjecture that has been rejected.[62]

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58 *P.Rain.Cent.* (1983) 69 (248).

59 *P.Mich.* 9 (1971) 542 (bef. 212).

60 *Stud.Pal.* 5 (1905) 66 (266) and further texts, in which he is a ἱππικὸς ἀπὸ στρατιᾶς.

61 *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1646 (268 and 270). Cf. *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 139 (after 175) for a veteran turned gymnasiarch in the previous century. He owns a dyer's workshop.

62 *I.Portes* (1984) 82 (210), rejected in *S.E.G.* 34 (1984) 1583. One other possible case is formed by *P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1256 (3rd cent. A.D.), in which a discharged legionary occurs who might be the son of one of the Kalpournioi. See Bowman (2001)

Among the over 200 attested councillors of Oxyrhynchos, none can be shown to have a military background.

It is easiest to interpret the absence of a significant number of examples of mobility of military men into the elite as a reflection of reality: no such mobility occurred. Nevertheless, it might be objected that omission of either civic or military titles could have been frequent. It is clear that the use of titles was partly arbitrary and partly depended on context. In most contexts, councillors and officeholders according to such an argument would have little reason to add their other title. The extent of the intrusion of military men into the elite would therefore remain hidden from view.

However, the view that significant military intrusion took place is difficult to sustain. Sometimes veterans may have entered the elite, and some cases may remain hidden from view because titles were omitted. However, there were simply not enough veterans of sufficient wealth to form a significant source of elite recruitment.[63]

The number of soldiers in Egypt in the third century has been estimated at 20,000. Apart from two major camps, they were more or less evenly distributed over the nomes. Each nome therefore comprised on average about 400 soldiers. This number may seem impressive at first sight. The soldiers who were discharged each year would be quite capable of filling a significant number of empty slots in the council. However, whether they were really capable of doing so would have depended to a large extent on their wealth, especially on their holdings of land.

Soldiers and veterans can frequently be found as property-owners. Despite the ban on ownership during their active service, soldiers owned, bought and sold land. Veterans occur frequently as landowners, especially in the villages.[64] However, none of this landed wealth was very significant. In the mid-fourth-century registers of Hermopolite land, less than 2% of owners have a military background.[65] There is no reason to assume that the situation was radically different in the third century. An indirect control is formed by the sums men-

no. 9-10. Given the immense wealth and status of that family, I remain doubtful, though the argument is admittedly circular. It would at any rate attest to mobility in the other direction: from the elite into the army.

[63] What follows is based on Alston (1995) 68 and especially Bagnall (1993) 174-179.

[64] Alston (1995) 57-59.

[65] Bagnall (1993) 178 for the calculation, and (1992c) for extensive discussion; cf. MacMullen (1963) 109 n.40.

tioned in military wills. Sometimes these are significant, but invariably they pale in comparison with those of the elite as discussed in the previous chapter.

Given the slight evidence for veteran participation in municipal life, and given the lack of significant numbers of veterans of sufficient wealth, the conclusion is inevitable that the newcomers to the elite should not be sought in military circles. The army itself might have acted as a major vehicle of advancement, and the fact that military men could exercise significant influence over civilians in more marginal areas is beyond doubt. However, military men should as a rule not be expected at the top of local society. The few examples of veterans participating in municipal life are no more than exceptions.

It is of fitting irony that the veteran who came closest to elite entrance failed to do just that. In 238, a veteran had his considerable holdings in the Oxyrhynchite nome of slightly over 93 arouras sold through an intermediary. The amounts involved suggest he might have qualified for councillorship. Apparently he had gone abroad and wanted to withdraw his wealth from Egypt. It is of equally fitting irony that he was assisted in the sale by a member of the elite, and that the estate was bought by another member of the elite, who must have added his plots to his already significant landholdings.[66]

Freedmen and their Descendants

Freedmen and their descendants form the other social group that requires discussion. The intrusion of freedmen into the urban elites is a classic topic in discussions of the Italian town councils. According to the theory, there were many urban slaves in the Italian cities. However, manumission was frequent, and this offered ample scope for advancement of former slaves.

Some of the freedmen earned a living by hard work. Some had already acquired wealth during their slave-careers, although formally this still remained property of their masters. The luckiest inherited the fortune of their masters. There can be no doubt that this occurred only in exceptional cases, but the fortunes that were inherited could be fabulous and became a symbol of the type of advancement freedmen

[66] *P.Coll.Youtie* 1 (1976) 65 (after May 241); the sale had taken place somewhat earlier. The buyer's family is discussed in the conclusion of this book.

could make. Whatever the source of wealth, it is only natural to suppose that among the wealthier freedmen economic advancement would create social expectations. Membership of the local council was normally barred to freedmen, but their sons were free persons and therefore usually had access to it—though there were also cases where entrance was delayed by more than one generation. What was out of reach for one generation could be achieved by the next. Descendants of wealthy freedmen can therefore often be found in the highest reaches of local society.

The influx of former-slaves was looked upon with disdain and abhorrence by members of the elite, and was supposed to be a threat to the established order. The newcomers had every reason to conform as quickly as possible to the existing norms. They bought land as soon as they had the opportunity and tried to erase the traces of their servile background. The result was quick adaptation. Renewal of the elite could occur without significant alteration in ideology.[67]

As it happens, this theory does not apply to the *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt. Whether that implies that it is misconceived altogether should remain open, but it is a possibility that cannot be excluded.[68] The focus has been far too much on the possibilities to acquire wealth and the barriers erected by the elite to avoid all too quick an entrance of the newcomers. Too little attention has been paid to the demographic properties of patterns of manumission.

To begin with, there is no evidence in Egypt for direct intrusion into the elite by freedmen. No magistracies were held by freedmen,[69] nor is there any freedman known as councillor. It seems likely that there existed a ban on the admission of freedmen in such functions, that free-born status was a necessary condition. Whether such a ban extended to their descendants remains unknown, however. There is no descendant of a freedman known as magistrate or councillor, but such a person would have few characteristics to identify him as such. He was, after all, free-born.

Further, it should be realised that our knowledge about freedman status is dependent on self-representation. Although freedman status is sometimes mentioned in situations where one would not expect it, it

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[67] Jongman (1988) 207-329.

[68] Note that Treggiari (1969) 213-214 makes a similar argument for the Roman west.

[69] Both in *S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7634 (249) and in *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2906 II (270) the offices belong to the patrons, not to the freedmen.

is naive to believe that every person that does *not* mention freedman status is a free-born person. In the census documents of the first three centuries, it can be shown that freedman status must often have been omitted. With normal patterns of mortality, the proportion of freedmen to slaves is simply too low.[70]

It therefore cannot be excluded completely that freedman status was not mentioned among members of the elite. More importantly, descendants of freedmen would no longer be recognisable as such in the sources because they were free persons if they were born after the manumission of their father. Even if all status indications were available in the sources, we still would not be able to offer a complete analysis.

It is here that demography helps significantly: it shows that the idea that significant intrusion of people of servile background took place among the elite is no more than an academic possibility. In contrast to other regions the demographic properties of patterns of manumission are known in considerable detail.[71] These are derived from an analysis from the census documents, which provide ages of slaves and freedmen. This allows to determine the age at manumission. Though *types* of manumission might have been affected by the diffusion of Roman law, it can be assumed without difficulty that patterns of manumission did not radically alter in the third century (partly covered by the census documents anyway).

Slavery, in Roman Egypt, was mostly confined to household slavery. Slaves were normally not used to work the lands. From the census documents, it can be learned that manumission was nearly universal. Quite remarkably, every slave could expect to be freed at some point during his or her life. There was relatively little to fear from the whims of a master. All a slave had to do was to be patient, and, of course, not to die in the intervening period, which given the prevailing high levels of mortality was already difficult enough. What is also striking is the consistency in the ages at which slaves were manumitted. In the case of women, manumission occurred almost invariably between 35 and 50. Men were freed slightly earlier, around 30.[72]

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[70] See Bagnall and Frier (1994) table d and 71 n.74 noting that "information on freed status may often be lost". If not, it would imply a most implausible increase of mortality *after* manumission.

[71] Bagnall and Frier (1994) passim. Cf. the interesting remarks on Roman Italy in Brunt (1987^2) 143-144.

[72] This is in line with the observation made in *P.Lips.* 2 (2002) 151 (with refs.)

The implication of this pattern is a very important one. Women hold the key. They entered the marriage market at a point when most marriages had already been concluded. Most slaves themselves would already have formed small families.[73] Marriages could be formalised after manumission, but children that were born before the manumission of their mother remained in captivity. Remaining freedwomen can hardly have formed attractive marriage-partners for anyone. The chances for reproduction after manumission were therefore severely limited. Among the men, only those freedmen who managed to marry outside their own group had a chance. Their chances of finding a young bride on the marriage market should not be considered overly optimistically, however. No matter how much opportunity freedmen had for the acquisition of wealth, offspring to effectuate the social rise would usually not be available.

In all probability freedmen themselves were barred from participation in elite politics. As they produced few free-born children, there were few descendants to enter political life and effectuate the social rise sought after by their parents. The issue is therefore not primarily one of economics but of demography. Economically, freedmen may be supposed to have had access to wealth. Some may perhaps have been able to compete economically with members of the elite, though the evidence is hardly abundant on this point. However, demography suggests that the intrusion of civic life by descendants of freedmen as it has been surmised for Roman Italy did not exist in this form in the *metropoleis* of Roman Egypt, for the simple reason that no descendants were available in significant numbers.

A Sub-Elite

Neither veterans nor freedmen seem to have made a significant contribution to elite recruitment. Other social groups are even less likely candidates. No matter how the involvement of members of the elite in trade is evaluated, it is unlikely that tradesmen themselves entered the elite in significant numbers—even apart from the fact that there is not a hint in the evidence. The Egyptian priesthood did not possess the

that slave sales occur between age 9 and 29.

[73] Bagnall and Frier (1994) 157, noting that these are difficult to discern in the census records.

status it had held in previous centuries and in any case forms a most unlikely source for elite recruitment as its worldview was so different. It is unlikely that there was any group with a specific social profile that filled the empty slots within the elite.

Nevertheless, new entrants had to be found somewhere. Given the fact that some elite families died out or impoverished, the corollary is that other non-elite families rose to prominence. Where did they come from?

The answer is relatively simple. As there is no evidence that this mobility is to be located in specific social groups, economy of hypothesis suggests that the new entrants are to be sought among the landowners directly below the elite. This is the group that owned holdings of some significance without qualifying directly for elite membership. It seems likely that new entrants were recruited from their ranks. Their mobility was unproblematic. No social stigma attached to their rise, as they originated from essentially the same group as the current elite members.

As can be inferred from the discussions in Part One Chapters Three and Four, it is very likely that landownership was a necessary condition for elite membership. This implies that elite recruitment bypassed people in the *metropoleis* who had acquired wealth by other means. As we saw, the proportion of people engaged in non-agricultural occupations was large in the *metropoleis*. It is certainly not unlikely that the income of some of these was large, despite the fact that most business remained small-scale. All such persons were probably passed over. There is nothing that indicates that there were alternative economic routes into the elite. Ownership of land was and remained all-important.

One of the characteristics of the ownership of land was the large degree of differentiation. Gini-coefficients were high; the differences between the top and the bottom of the pyramid of landowners was very large. In fourth-century Hermopolis a few families owned an enormous number of the urban landholdings, while many families had only tiny plots. It is likely that such patterns were the norm in all nomes, also in the third century, though the situation may have been less extreme in the smaller ones.

Alongside the quite significant degree of differentiation, the registers of landholdings also display another feature. Somewhat paradoxically, they show the existence of a spectrum of owners and holdings. In-between the group of owners with small plots and the small group

of families with extremely large holdings, there existed significant groups of persons with holdings of intermediate size. Some owned barely more than 10 arouras, but there also existed significant numbers of owners with holdings between 50 and 100 arouras. Such persons could be considered to be of moderate wealth.

It is the latter group that is of relevance. The line separating them from the elite was thin. It is, in fact, essentially our own creation. Whether all persons above it were considered to be members of the elite and all persons below it not remains unknown. It must at any rate have been relatively easy to cross the line.

Single male heirs of families of moderate wealth would be best placed to gain entrance into the elite. If other brothers and sisters had died, a remaining son would inherit all the accumulated wealth from both his father and his mother. Instead of fragmentation, consolidation occurred. A son could in this way become wealthier than his father simply by outliving his brothers and sisters.

From an analytical point of view, it is thus legitimate to locate the upward mobility among the group of landowners of moderate wealth directly below the elite. However, it cannot be excluded that reality was more fuzzy than our analytical concepts allow. As there is no observable discontinuity in the distribution of holdings, it is not only difficult to separate a sub-elite from an elite, but it is also difficult to distinguish the sub-elite from the rest of the landowners. Where should the lines between them be drawn? At 50 arouras? 40 arouras? 30 arouras? And how would the situation differ between smaller and larger nomes?

In view of this more fuzzy reality, it is perhaps also important to emphasise the fluidity of holdings. Due to the patterns of property transmission a person could inherit at different moments. There was also a lively market in land: plots were bought and sold with a remarkable frequency. The amount of land in the ownership of an individual might therefore fluctuate significantly.

It is not possible to analyse entrance into the elite in much detail, but we can observe its occurrence. Of the majority of councillors no father’s name survives. In theory, all these persons might have been new entrants. But as we have seen, it is improbable that all were, for that would imply unrealistically high levels of elite replacement.

Of the councillors that do mention a father’s name, only few mention a title of the father. These latter are the only ones of which we can be certain that they were *not* new entrants. The group of council-

lors with father's names but without titles forms the most interesting category. We find for example a man who is *agoranomos* and councillor, but whose father carries no titles.[74] Of some of them the context indicates they were in fact new entrants. In one case, of one person the offices of the father are mentioned, whereas of two others only father's names without titles are provided. The implication is that they were new to the elite.[75]

To some extent the argument nevertheless remains an argument by default. No significant entrance into the elite is to be expected from among the military or the servile parts of the population of Roman Egypt, nor can it be found in the evidence. Upward mobility among other social groups is even less likely. In the absence of a specific social profile for social risers mobility is to be sought among people with the same characteristics as those of the elite. The obvious candidate is the group of landowners directly below the elite. Given the fact that the boundary separating them from the elite was a permeable one, mobility is likely to have been unproblematic.

New entrants can indeed be found in the sources. Their potential number is enormous: they form in fact the great majority of all members of the elite. Only in some cases, however, can it be positively asserted that they were newcomers. In the other cases, omission of names and titles may have been at work. But that they did enter in significant numbers can hardly be doubted.

Conclusion

This chapter started from the observation that some families remained part of the elite for many generations. This fact has seemed self-evident to many, but warrants closer investigation. High mortality and partible inheritance do not make it likely that many families continued their elite existence for more than a few generations. So how is the evidence for continuous families to be evaluated? On the one hand, as the argument for cyclical mobility is deductive in nature, contradictory evidence cannot disprove it. On the other hand, it would be too

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[74] *B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1062 (236), also occurring, without patronym, in *P.Oxy.* 7 (1910) 1031 (228).

[75] *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229); both also seem to be mentioned in *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348 (224). They might be (distant) relatives. The father of one of them probably also occurs in *P.Oxy.* 65 (1998) 4481 (179), also without offices.

easy to relegate the evidence of continuity to the realm of exceptions, and leave it there. There is thus a need to investigate continuity in more detail.

The research can only be indirect. Individual behaviour is beyond recovery. Leaving aside the question whether the findings would be representative, it simply is impossible to single out one family and study the behaviour of its members in depth. We cannot judge how successful choices were at the individual level, because we have only a general idea of what the possibilities for choice were.

Instead, what can be done is to study a series of subjects separately. Is there a pattern to discern of what type of families remained in power? Are there strategies that enhanced the chance to continue status and wealth in the next generation? To what extent does ideology and self-representation have a bearing on behaviour, or vice versa, to what extent is ideology affected by the lack of continuity?

To start with, the lack of observable continuity is as striking as the occurrences of continuity. Some families managed to remain part of the elite for relatively long periods of time: three generations, four generations, even five generations. But many others left no trace in the record beyond the existence of a single member of the elite. In part this is due to the nature of the sources. No doubt many long elite family trees remain hidden from view. Nevertheless, the patterns observed can also be taken as a dim reflection of reality, or at least as consistent with the theory of cyclical mobility. Continuity for more than two generations is likely to have been the exception, not the rule.

Given the unpredictability of the demographic regime, continuity was never guaranteed. But there were ways to enhance the chances. Members of the elite practised a number of strategies that affected their family's fortune. The most important was also the most obvious: they could try to find appropriate spouses for their children.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, women were property owners in their own right. Marriage was therefore of paramount importance. Patterns of elite marriage were as one would expect. Marriage was endogamous, in the sense that members of the elite married within their own class. Of brother-sister marriage there is no hint, nor is there a trace of other types of close-kin marriage. Instead people married with members of other elite families, and clearly used marriage as a way to cement ties. Marriages were sometimes concluded with Alexandrians: persons with Alexandrian status who had local interests. Marriages were not concluded between people of different

metropoleis. This must have formed a deliberate limitation of the possibilities for choice. Civic competition had its cost.

Discontinuity is likely to have been quite normal. Most families will have managed to remain part of the elite only for a relatively short period. While father to son succession might have been frequent, continuity for three generations or more will have been exceptional. Due to partible inheritance and high levels of mortality, families must frequently have impoverished or died out.

Such discontinuity is not always easy to observe. There are some cases where discontinuity can be positively asserted. However, for most members of the elite no information is available about their family. Potentially all these persons had a discontinuous history, but it is plainly impossible that no succession occurred in any of the cases, for that would imply rates of replacement that are difficult to believe in any society. The sources are hopelessly inadequate in that respect. But they do help to shift the burden of proof. Those who want to assert that continuity among the elite was the norm have a lot to explain.

With respect to ideology, there can be no doubt that continuity was the ideal. The inscriptions from Pachnemounis are a display both of what could be achieved and of the pride with which elite families competed with each other in that respect. Discontinuity seems to have been relatively unproblematic, however. There was no family name to be preserved, and no real stigma seems to have attached to families that submerged in the general urban population. It is remarkable that the offices of previous generations could still form a source of status, even if it was clear that persons themselves had no titles to boast about.

A high degree of discontinuity implies that the elite was frequently renewed. Some families remained in power for more generations, but many families were new. Who were these newcomers? Traditionally, mobility has been located in specific social groups: in former slaves and their descendants, and in former soldiers. They were well-placed for advancement in an otherwise static society, had the wealth to compete with elite families and had connections with members of the elite, and hence, we may suppose, the ambition to become one of them.

In both cases, however, there are reasons to assume that their advancement was limited. Occasionally freedmen, veterans and their descendants entered the elite, but such successful intrusions did not occur on a large scale. Veterans of sufficient wealth did not exist in suf-

ficient numbers, and the age of manumission of slaves was such that only limited numbers of free-born descendants were produced. No matter how well-qualified veterans and free-born descendants of freedmen might have been to enter the elite, there simply were too few of them to form a force to be reckoned with.

There is, in fact, no intrinsic reason why mobility should be located in a specific social group. It is much easier to seek the new entrants in the layers of society directly beneath the elite of landowners: among those people with landholdings just below the minimum requirement for elite entrance. It is to this group that discontinuous elite families reverted, and it is in this group that social risers should be sought. No social stigma attached to their rise because they belonged essentially to the same milieu, and shared the same ideology. Renewal, in that sense, was entirely unproblematic. The amount of mobility was much larger than is usually assumed, but paradoxically hardly had an influence on the composition of the elite. Renewal could occur without change.[76]

[76] For the expression, see Jongman (1988) 275-329, though in his case applied to upwardly mobile descendants of freedmen quickly adapting to elite ideology.

CONCLUSION

Cessio Bonorum

In 248 a man named Septimios Eudaimon, gymnasiarch and councillor of Oxyrhynchos and son of an *exegetes* and president took a drastic step. He refused to accept an appointment as eutheniarch (supervisor of the food supply) on the grounds that he already held another office, the gymnasiarchy. He ceded his property to the president of the council, who was to perform both offices himself.

> To Aurelios Pasion-Apollonios, ex-gymnasiarch, president in office, councillor of the city of the Oxyrhynchites from Septimios Eudaimon, gymnasiarch, councillor of the same city, son of Septimios Serenos, ex-*exegetes*, ex-president of the same city.
>
> Whereas, contrary to the resolutions made for me by their excellencies the council upon the conditions which I laid down for undertaking the gymnasiarchy in accordance with my means, you nominated me today which is the sixteenth in the most excellent council to [*space left empty*] days of eutheniarchy: immediately in the proceedings of the council I put forward to you a resignation and now through this petition I submit to you the resignation of all property belonging to me on the condition that you take my property and perform for me in full both the gymnasiarchy and the eutheniarchy and pay in full all the expenses pertaining to it and furthermore the taxes in grain and money owed by me on the property I own and on the portion of the estate formerly of Klaudios Syrion eternal gymnasiarch of most shining Alexandria which I have on lease. In respect to all of which taxes the wine produced from the lands has been distrained by the *dekaprotoi*. And being officially questioned, I agreed.
>
> Year 6 of the Imperatores Caesares Marci Julii Philippi Pii Felices Augusti, Hathyr 16.[1]

The procedure Septimios Eudaimon followed was one of *cessio bonorum*. He ceded his property to the person who was responsible

[1] *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2854 (248) (transl. ed. with minor adaptations).

for his nomination as eutheniarch. The latter was obliged to take the task upon him. In consequence, Aurelios Pasion-Apollonios would have to perform three offices simultaneously: next to his presidency also the eutheniarchy and the gymnasiarchy.

The concept of *cessio bonorum* is well-known in Roman law. Applied to office-holding, it offered a protection against unjust evaluations of property size and the imposition of too heavy burdens. There are some cases of its application in Egypt, some concerning magistracies. The particulars of the procedure are still unclear. It remains unclear if *cessio bonorum* applied to all the real estate of a person, or only to a part of it (though Septimios Eudaimon's statement does not suggest this).[2]

What is not in doubt, however, is that *cessio bonorum* was a drastic step. In a society that put a premium on wealth, and in a society in which wealth consisted mainly of land, handing over to someone else one's property must have been a dramatic gesture of the first order. Negotiation about office-holding was part and parcel of third-century civic life. Apparently Septimios Eudaimon had also negotiated about the terms under which he held the gymnasiarchy, for he refers to promises that had been broken by the new appointment. The legitimacy of a nomination was often questioned in petitions. However, open refusal to accept an office and *cessio bonorum* cannot have been something that was lightly done.

Septimios Eudaimon's cession of his property in 248 appears to be a desperate measure in the face of social and economic bankruptcy.[3] Nevertheless, it did not mark the end of his career. In this particular case, somewhat more is known about the context.[4] Septimios Eudaimon was of wealthy stock. In 238 his father had been able to buy over 93 arouras in at least 22 different plots from a veteran.[5] This suggests that he belonged to the wealthier parts of the elite, which is also implied by the fact that he had been president of the town council. Whether his son Septimios Eudaimon had already inherited his father's estate in 248 is unknown.[6] It is in any case unlikely he would

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[2] Lewis (1997²) 100-105.

[3] Lewis (1997²) 101.

[4] See also Cockle (1981) 92 for a discussion of the family and references to some more related texts.

[5] *P.Coll.Youtie* 1 (1976) 65 (after May 241), the sale taking place in 238. (The text is briefly mentioned in Part Two Chapter Four).

[6] It is unclear when his father died; he was still alive in *P.Coll.Youtie* 1 (1976) 65 (after May 241). The name of the pottery—'mother's'—in *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3596 (ca

receive the full estate, for Septimios Eudaimon had at least one sister, and, to judge by the size of the shares of presumably inherited property that are mentioned elsewhere, at least one more sibling.[7] What is certain is that after the *cessio bonorum* of 248 he became owner of property again, probably through an inheritance. In 260 he had a share of a pottery with a large output of pots.[8] Given the connection between potteries and estates it is certainly possible that by this time he also owned plots of land again. Further, after 248 he continued to bear the titles of gymnasiarch and councillor, implying he was successful in avoiding the eutheniarchy without losing his seat in the council.[9] It is even possible that he became president himself; perhaps even Alexandrian magistrate.[10] He also may have had a son who became councillor and *exegetes*,[11] which again suggests that the *cessio bonorum* was not as damaging to the family as one may suppose. It is certainly possible that Septimios Eudaimon's use of *cessio bonorum* was a strategic move to shift the burden of the magistracy back to his nominator.

Strategy or not, Septimios Eudaimon's reconstructed *Werdegang* forms a good illustration of the precarious position of members of the urban elites of third-century Egypt. He had wealthy parents, embarked on an excellent career, but was then pushed over the edge. Probably thanks to an inheritance he managed to recover and he remained a respected member of the elite. Apparently his newly acquired wealth was sufficient to continue his career and to enable a son to continue elite membership into the third generation.

Septimios Eudaimon managed to survive, but others may have been less lucky. They may have had less wealth, they may not have received an inheritance at the right moment, they may have played the

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240-255) line 7 may imply that Septimios Eudaimon's mother was dead at the moment that document was written. Cf. also *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3597 (260), probably concerning the same pottery.

[7] *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255) and 3597 (260).

[8] *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3597 (260).

[9] *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3597 (260), cf. *P.Oxy*. 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255). This is in line with the idea that *cessio bonorum* should not lead to loss of status.

[10] Probably president in *P.Oxy.Hels*. (1979) 25 (264); probably identical with the *kosmetes* of Alexandria in *P.Oxy*. 51 (1984) 3612 (272-275).

[11] *P.Oxy*. 12 (1916) 1413 (272) line 2 mentions a Septimios Serenos-Ischyrion, *exegetes*, appearing at a council meeting (and hence a councillor, we may suppose). Given the onomastic similarities it is likely that he was a family member; given the chronology he might be a son. *P.Oxy*. 14 (1920) 1649 (after 279/280) mentions an Isidora who may have been a daughter.

game of politics with less success, or they simply had no sons that survived them. They tried to avoid the imposition of liturgies or, once they were imposed, tried to escape from them.[12]

The preceding chapters of this book presented a social, economic and demographic profile of the urban elites of third-century Egypt. The arguments are of a generalised nature. Generalisations can hardly explain individual behaviour, and hence do not offer a direct explanation of the case of Septimios Eudaimon or his less fortunate fellow-councillors. However, in a more abstract sense they increase our understanding. Septimios Eudaimon's motives for his action are lost, but the arguments that are presented in this book provide the context, and they can explain why people behaved like he and his fellow-councillors did.

In order to understand this context, it is helpful to offer a summary of the arguments. The ambiguous position of the urban elites was the product of an urban society that combined steep hierarchies with high levels of mobility.

HIERARCHIES

In order to understand the structure of urban society of Roman Egypt a number of factors should be taken into account. These are the degree of urbanisation, the degree of differentiation between *metropoleis*, the degree of economic differentiation between the urban landowners, and the degree of social differentiation within this population and within the elite. These factors were discussed Part One of the book, in Chapters One to Four.

Chapter One of Part One addressed issues of urbanisation. Scholars seldom realise that levels of urbanisation in Roman Egypt were relatively high. Hardly any characteristic of the population of Roman Egypt is known with certainty. Instead of discussing individual properties, it is therefore more rewarding to explore the relation between them. The use of an equation showed that if our conventions about the figures for population size, population density and number of towns of Roman Egypt are even roughly correct, Egypt must have been

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[12] Both possibilities are on display in a report of a council meeting in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.).

highly urbanised. At least one in five persons of the population is likely to have lived in an urban centre.

Chapter Two of Part One described the urban system of Roman Egypt. Alexandria dominated the urban landscape of Egypt. However, the *metropoleis* of Egypt too were settlements of importance and complexity in their own right. As the *metropoleis* were fed from their own territory, it is possible to produce a series of estimates of urban population size on the basis of known nome sizes. These estimates suggested that there was wide variation in urban population size. Some of the *metropoleis* were rather large, in the order of 30,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, but most were relatively small, in the order of 10,000 inhabitants. The evidence we have tends to come from the larger *metropoleis* of Middle Egypt: Arsinoe, Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis. Their evidence obscures our view in a number of respects. In discussions of urban elites it should not be forgotten that most elites lived in relatively small towns.

Chapter Three of Part One dealt with the distribution of wealth and inequality. The members of the local elites were wealthy landowners who resided in towns. They owned estates consisting of scattered plots that were located all over the district surrounding the *metropolis*. They lived from the proceeds of these landholdings, which were usually leased out. However, the nature of elite wealth forms a complex subject. Elite wealth did not consist solely of holdings of land. There was also modest involvement in business. However, most if not all such investments remained closely related to agriculture. This is convenient for our analysis, because land is the only type of wealth we are reasonably well informed about.

The information we have about land concerns the size of holdings and the type of land. The major evidence is formed by two registers of land from Hermopolis dating to the middle of the fourth century. With some modifications and provisos, the evidence of this large town from a somewhat later period is applicable to the towns of the third century.

In order to analyse the distribution of landholdings, three factors needed to be discussed: firstly, the gender of the owners, secondly, the proportion of owners in the total population and thirdly, the distribution of holdings among the owners.

Firstly, female landownership did occur. Women formed a substantial minority among the landowners. Some of them were extremely wealthy. However, patterns of female landownership are ill-

understood and hard to explain. There is too much variation in the data of the surviving registers to be able to offer a single explanation.

Secondly, in the larger towns about 2% of the population owned land, a remarkably low proportion. In villages, the percentage was somewhat higher, in the order of 5 to 10%, whereas in Alexandria the percentage was probably below the 2%. In other words, there existed an inverse correlation between settlement size and number of landowners. It is therefore possible that in smaller towns the percentage of owners was somewhat higher than in larger towns.

Thirdly, the differentiation in the distribution of landholdings over the urban landowners was high. Roughly half of the owners owned less than 10 arouras, and hence did not own enough land to make a living from. Among the other half, large differences occurred. Some persons owned 40 arouras, others 400. The differences between the top and the bottom of the distribution were large. The spectrum ran from less to 1 aroura to over 500 arouras. At the same time, however, the spectrum of owners was continuous. Some people were extremely wealthy, but there was no clear cut-off point between the wealthy and the rest of the landowners.

Chapter Four of Part One was concerned with elite formation. The political elite of each town consisted of the wealthier parts of its landowning classes, excluding women and minors. From the beginning of the third century onwards, membership of the elite could be expressed in councillorship. As there were at this period no competing expressions of elite status, the size and the composition of the council forms a good approximation of the elite.

Membership of the council was open to free adult males of sufficient social and economic standing. Such persons were probably admitted through cooptation or a similar informal procedure, not through an official procedure. There can be little doubt that the ownership of sufficient wealth formed the dominant factor in admission. In the larger *metropoleis* the threshold will have been in the order of 100 arouras.

It is usually thought that all *metropoleis* had councils of 100 members each. Given the fact that the councils were created at one moment in time, it is likely that some system was used in attributing sizes to the councils of the *metropoleis*. Either sizes were proportionate to urban population size, or a fixed size system was in use. There is some evidence hinting that the councils of Oxyrhynchos and Hermopolis counted 100 members, and it seems likely that Alexandria's

council was larger. Taken together, these findings leave room for two possibilities. Either the councils of the *metropoleis* were all the same size and counted 100 members. Or, in a proportionate system, the councils of the larger councils had 100 members and the councils of the smaller *metropoleis* were smaller.

Above the local elites there also existed a regional elite. Its members held offices in the state bureaucracy as *strategoi* or royal scribes, and often participated in Alexandrian politics. Its importance lies in the fact that it was integrated with the local elites to a remarkable degree. Economically it was tied because it owned its landholdings in the nomes. Members of the local elites could also manage or lease such lands. Members of the regional elite were politically tied to the *metropoleis* through active participation in local politics. Intermarriage within local elites occurred on a large scale. The regional elite was in fact integrated with the local elite to such an extent that it is not always possible to determine whether it consists of geographically mobile Alexandrians or socially mobile locals.

Levels of differentiation, then, were high. A relatively high level of urbanisation, relatively large differences in urban population sizes, a high differentiation in the distribution of wealth, and a high differentiation at the social level all fostered the formation of an urban elite that stood aloft of the rest of the population, both urban and rural. The organisation of urban society was strongly hierarchical.

Mobility and Continuity

Hierarchies may imply a lack of mobility. If social distances between groups in society are relatively large, upward movement from one group to another may have been severely restricted. This has indeed often been surmised for the elites of the Roman world, and also seems to have implicitly been assumed for the elites of Roman Egypt.

As far as Egypt is concerned, the models of social mobility that are traditionally employed are misguided, however: they locate the possibilities for mobility in the wrong place, among descendants of slaves and soldiers. Rather than starting from the perspective of upward mobility, it is better to focus on downward mobility. The cause of this type of mobility lies in the fragmentation of property through practices of inheritance and the high levels of mortality. It is therefore more useful to apply the concept of cyclical mobility, which envis-

ages a continuous movement in and out of the elite. The aim of the chapters of Part Two of this book was to discuss the factors that contributed to this type of cyclical mobility and to discuss their implications. This necessitated a discussion of elite demography in Chapter Two, of patterns of inheritance in Chapter Three, and of continuity, discontinuity and renewal in Chapter Four.

Chapter Two of Part Two dealt with the demographic regime of the urban elites. Demography is of crucial importance for understanding patterns of succession among the elites of Roman Egypt. Patterns of mortality and fertility created a structural volatility in society. It was unpredictable which families would survive and which would not.

It is often objected that the hardships of the ancient demographic regime affected elites to a lesser extent than the rest of the population. This is intuitively an attractive thought, but turns out to be incorrect. A negative argument can be offered on the basis of a comparison between impressionistic evidence about the elites and the formal demographic characteristics of the census population. All possible indicators for differential demography point in the wrong direction. There is no indication for particular high ages at death, or, more generally, for lower levels of mortality. Marital patterns conform to those of the rest of the population, not to those that have been surmised for the imperial aristocracy, where the importance of strategic alliances through marriage ties led to early marriage. Further, there is no evidence for a lowering of fertility. Fertility had to be high in order to avoid extinction, but the number of children that survived was unpredictable. The demographic regime of the elite was not fundamentally different from that of the census population.

The other major factor that is important for elite continuity is property transmission. This is the topic of Chapter Three of Part Two. Elites transferred their property mainly through inheritances. In the system of partible inheritance that was in use in Roman Egypt women and men had equal rights. In such a radical inheritance system succession was directly dependent on mortality: the number of surviving children determined the size of the share each would obtain.

This raises the question to what extent the mechanisms of partible inheritance applied to the elite. How much flexibility did the elite possess in transmitting their property? Would it be in a position to favour sons? Dowries contained no real estate and were indirectly compensated by a smaller share in the inheritance. However, they were

relatively small compared to the size of the inheritance and therefore helped little to counter the effects of radical partible inheritance. Testacy seems a better candidate for mitigation. Partible inheritance was based on unwritten custom, but the elite often used wills. In theory they had the freedom to alter the rules of the game in favour of their sons. In legacies they did in fact exercise this freedom, but legacies consisted only of smaller parts of the property. Further, there is a not well-attested possibility that the older Egyptian practice of favouring the eldest son with a double share was still in use, or was coming into use again. Other possibilities to favours sons also appear in wills. Overall, however, there was little room for real adaptation. Radical partibility of inheritances was and remained the norm.

In consequence, succession was to a large extent determined by the demographic lottery. Chapter Four of Part Two concerned elite continuity. Some families had long histories of elite membership. They were politically active for several generations. However, such families did not form the rule but the exception. Most families were members of the elite for only a short period.

The lack of continuity raises the question about the identity of newcomers. On the basis of the scholarly literature about social mobility in the Roman world mobility has been sought among two social groups: military men and former slaves. However, such a type of social mobility cannot be found in the sources concerning the Egyptian urban elites. There are no former slaves and hardly any men with military background among the third-century elites of Egypt. Moreover, calculations show that there was a lack of sufficient numbers of veterans with sufficient means, and patterns of manumission predict that slaves after their manumission would produce a small number of free offspring. Neither descendants of freedmen nor military men were available in sufficient numbers to fill the empty slots.

In the face of a lack of obvious other candidates, it is much easier to search for newcomers among the landowners just below the elite, especially among those landowners who owned too little to qualify themselves for elite membership but who produced single male heirs. Mobility was cyclical in that many members of the elite dropped out of the elite within one or two generations, whereas others rose to prominence. This type of mobility appears to have been unproblematic. Continuity was preferred, of course, and was proudly advertised. The argument that some families dominated civic life is therefore not completely erroneous. Wealthier families were better placed to miti-

gate the effects of demographic chance for the simple reason that they were wealthy. However, many families were not as well placed as they were. They managed to be members of the local elite for only a brief period. Discontinuity must have been far from rare.

EGYPT AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The high degree of urbanisation, of economic differentiation and of social differentiation can all be regarded as distinctively Roman characteristics of Egyptian society. Things Roman came late to Egypt, but there is no reason to believe that by the third century Egypt was different in a structural sense from the rest of the Roman Empire. Egypt had many peculiar traits, but so did other regions.

Graeco-Roman civic ideology was introduced at a relatively late moment in Egypt, and therefore was at a disadvantage from the start. Some scholars have attributed the problems of the third-century councils to the crisis of the third century. However, the pressures to which urban life was subjected were to a large extent inherent. They had to do with economic differentiation, with demography and with patterns of inheritance, and little with chronological developments. External factors, such as increasing tax rates, may have brought the problems out more clearly, but did not cause them.

The basic ideas formulated in this book about the vulnerability of the urban elites have in one way or another already been formulated by other scholars, who applied them to different regions and to different periods. Applying them to third-century Egypt makes it possible to study them in depth. There is no other region in the Roman Empire where urban hierarchies, economic differentiation, patterns of inheritance and demographic regime can be studied in such detail, let alone in combination with each other.

Egypt, then, functions as a laboratory. Egypt may help in refining the models for other regions of the Roman Empire, for which fewer (or different) sources are available. To create such models for the rest of the Roman world would require detailed analysis of the factors discussed in this book: levels of urbanisation, urban systems, economic and social differentiation, demographic regimes, patterns of inheritance and so on. It is obvious that the question to what extent the ideas are applicable to the rest of the Roman Empire cannot be addressed here. On the one hand it is unlikely that the ideas formulated

for Egypt can be applied without any adaptation, on the other hand it is difficult to belief that they do not have a wider relevance than to Egypt alone.

Septimios Eudaimon was lucky. Despite his *cessio bonorum* he managed to continue his membership of the elite. Ironically, the president of the council he ceded his property to, Aurelios Pasion-Apollonios, probably had experienced similar problems. Only a short while before, he had handed in a petition to relieve his son from the gymnasiarchy on the grounds that he himself had been both gymnasiarch and eutheniarch.[13] The problem was hardly novel.

How Aurelios Pasion-Apollonios coped with the new situation is not known. We do not know whether he actually held three offices simultaneously. What is certain is that many councillors were not as fortunate as Septimios Eudaimon. They were crushed by the weight of magistracies and did not manage to hand over sufficient wealth to their off-spring to continue elite membership.

In the end, the problem is not that civic life along Graeco-Roman lines disappeared, but that it functioned so well for so long. Given the constraints the achievements remain impressive. A strongly hierarchical organisation of urban life existed in combination with a highly dynamic pattern of elite renewal. In the end, the social structure needed little leverage to collapse, but it had functioned for a relatively long time. "The Roman power forever!", the Oxyrhynchite people shouted at the turn of the fourth century.[14] Hierarchies, however, were fragile—very fragile.

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[13] *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1418 (247). It is not absolutely certain that this was the same person (the name is only partly preserved), but it seems likely.

[14] *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 41 (ca 300).

APPENDIX
THE COUNCILLORS OF OXYRHYNCHOS IN THE THIRD CENTURY

The aim of this Appendix is to present a new list of the councillors of third-century Oxyrhynchos. Included are all named councillors and presidents attested between 201 and 300. The list is based on a computer search in the Duke Database of Documentary Papyri.[1] The results have been compared with the older lists of councillors of Calderini, Fikhman and Bowman, as well as with the list of gymnasiarchs of Sijpesteijn, the list of *exegetai* of Kramer and Hagedorn and the lists of Alexandrian officeholders and councillors of Delia.[2]

In one respect the list presents more information than the lists published thus far in that it also offers in some detail information about family members. This information may be of help in establishing new prosopographical connections (and has resulted in fact in some new identifications), but its primary purpose was to find evidence for the issues discussed in this book: succession to office, marriage patterns, mortality, and so on.

Anonymi have only been entered in the list if a text originally contained a name that is now lost; general references to 'a president' or 'a councillor' have been ignored.[3] Some uncertain cases have not been entered in the list either.[4] References to unpublished texts are only given if the person is already known from published texts.

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[1] Duke Database of Documentary Papyri, currently located at the Perseus Digital Library, at www.perseus.tufts.edu. Searches were made in Febr. 2004 for *bouleut..* and *prutan...* The results were subsequently selected (by hand) for Oxyrhynchite provenance. For papyri not yet entered in the Database, I have consulted the 7th edition of the Wörterlisten compiled by D. Hagedorn, currently located at http://www.papy.uni-hd.de/WL/WL.html.

[2] Calderini (1951) with the corrections of J. Bingen, *Cd'E* 27 (1952) 316-318; Bowman (1971) 131-147, Fichman, (1974); Sijpesteijn (1986); Kramer and Hagedorn in *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) 217-270; Delia (1992) 147-161.

[3] In consequence, and contrary to Bowman's practice, references to 'the president said' in council meetings have not been entered in the list.

[4] Though an elite context is likely in *P.Laur.* 3 (1979) 74 (late 3rd cent. A.D.), the father of the unknown victor at sacred and olympic games need not necessarily have

In proposing identifications between namesakes caution has been applied. As a rule, identifications have been made on the basis of three criteria. Although these are in themselves obvious, it may be helpful to make them explicit. First, persons should bear the same names, including (where relevant) the alias-name. As there are in the present list no unambiguous cases where the order is reversed, both alias-names should be mentioned in the same order.[5] The use or absence of Aurelios after 212 A.D. has been ignored. As there are some certain cases where Markos Aurelios and Aurelios are used interchangeably, no meaning has been attached to the inclusion or absence of Markos.[6] The mentioning of other '*praenomina*', such as Septimios and Tib. Klaudios, however has been taken to be significant.[7] Given the fact that many councillors had common names no systematic attempt has been made to find all namesakes without titles: in some cases the number of possible identifications is almost infinite.

Second, persons should bear the same titles, or, if there are other good grounds for identification of two persons with different titles, the resulting career should make sense with respect to career patterns and chronology. It is further important to realise that apart from the presidency of the council office holding does not necessarily imply membership of the council. Although many gymnasiarchs were councillor, there is no reason to assume that all gymnasiarchs who solely mention the gymnasiarchy were also councillor. On the contrary, we

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been councillor. The most likely reconstruction of lines 1-3 (with unknown line-division) is: N.N.] ἱερονείκης ὀλυμ̣[πιονίκης further titles υἱος (?)] Ὡρείωνος τοῦ καὶ Ἀ̣[νθεστίου offices (not: τοῦ δεῖνος ὡς ἐτῶν X ἀπὸ) τῆς Ὀξυρυγχι]τῶν πόλεω[ς] and in lines 6-7 Ὡρείωνο]ς τοῦ καὶ Ἀνθεστ[ίου offices]οῦ τῆς αὐτῆς πόλεως. The supplement (βουλευτ]οῦ of the ed. is just one of many possibilities; a patronym (τοῦ δεῖνος) is possible but on statistical grounds less likely).

5 This might be overcautious. See the comments in *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2924 (3rd cent.) 1n and the examples of reversal listed by R. Calderini in *Aegyptus* 21 (1941) 253. But consider the case of Ioulianos-Dioskourides in the present list, whose descendants may have reversed the order of names each generation, which only makes sense if the order was fixed. Cf. also *S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 12158 (bef. 264 (?)), where a Markos Aurelios Achilleus-Ammonios appears side by side with a Markos Aurelios Ammonion-Achilleus. Although it is not stated in the text, it does not seem farfetched to assume they are brothers. At any rate, it cannot be doubted that the order of their names was used to differentiate between the two men. The possible reversal of 'praenomen' and 'cognomen' among some of the Kalpournioi forms a special (and still unproven) case.

6 See Hagedorn (1979), showing that the addition of Markos is a status indicator that was used haphazardly.

7 I use the word *praenomen* in lieu of a better term; the application of Latin onomastic terminology to names in Roman Egypt creates difficulties of its own.

may assume that if an office holder was councillor his councillorship would normally be mentioned. In the present list identifications with office-holders who were not councillor are therefore never regarded as completely certain, unless there is further evidence in support.

Third, identifications between persons are only made if they occur in a limited time-span. Where plausibility stops is of course somewhat arbitrary, but caution is certainly warranted. Although in theory there is no difficulty in making identifications between persons attested several decades apart, there is always the possibility that we have to do with homonymous sons or other close relatives. Given the extent to which names were repeated within families, not even an uncommon name provides a guarantee that two attestations concern the same person.[8] Conversely, it should be kept in mind that the date of the texts in which they occur may differ from the moment they were active: some were dead at the moment the text in which they are mentioned was written, and some of the names entered in the list occur as patronyms or even papponyms.

Occasionally other criteria have been applied as well. These usually concern the occurrence of family members (sons, daughters) in both texts, the occurrence of other persons in both texts, or the fact that the texts themselves are identical in nature.

Councillors of whom the place of councillorship is uncertain have not been listed, unless there are good grounds to attribute them to Oxyrhynchos. Given the predominance of Oxyrhynchos in the geographical distribution of papyri, it is likely that at least some of the councillors of unknown origin originate from Oxyrhynchos as well; the problem is that it cannot be determined who these are.

Contrary to what seems to become standard practice, in listing offices no attempt has been made to distinguish between current and past offices. Although there are some cases where the order in which

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[8] It is striking that this possibility is sometimes ignored even by the most experienced papyrologists. So, Bagnall (1992b) argues for the identification one elite woman named Ptolemais with a namesake on the grounds that “if the identification is denied, we must posit the existence of one well-to-do, landowning woman with that name who owned the *Sikyonika* and the two Homer papyri, and another well-to-do, landowning woman with that name whose family owned Aficanus’ Kestoi”. While the identification is plausible enough, it is noteworthy that the possibility that the two attestations concern close relatives is never canvassed. The dispute about the dating of the Landlisten forms another example: the editors dated the text on the basis of the identification of a man named Amazonios with a well-known namesake but did not consider the possibility that he could also be a related family member.

offices were held is relatively clear, in many cases it cannot be determined whether offices were past or present. Sometimes it was stated that an office was a current one, as in *enarchos prytanis*, 'president in office', and sometimes it was stated that it was a past one, as in *prytaneusas*, ex-president, or in *genomenos exegetes*, former *exegetes*. But often abbreviations were used that leave both possibilities open: *pryt*( ) could be resolved as either *pryt(anis)* or *pryt(aneusas)*. Further, it is doubtful that offices that were written out in full (e.g. *exegetes*) were always current ones—if so, it would imply that persons often held more than two offices simultaneously, which strains credulity. Lastly, in cases where the word *genomenos*, 'former', is used, it is not always clear if the word applied only to the first office, or to a string of offices.

Not only magistracies, but also liturgies have been listed. As is well known, in the third century magistracies came more and more to resemble liturgies. From the titulature it can be inferred, however, that they remained conceptually differentiated. Whereas liturgies disappeared from the title after the term of office, magistratures kept being mentioned. As their mention may however be of help in making further identifications, liturgies are included in the list.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
1.	Aur. Achillion s. of Kornelianos	president	*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2474 (mid-late 3rd cent.)	Former-president at the time of the document. γαμβρός of the testator in a will in which he is appointed *curator* of the testator's minor sons. Contra transl., more likely brother-in-law than son-in-law of the testator. If so, the testator's wife, Aur. Chairemonis, is his sister. Poss. related to Aur. Kornelianos, president. The ed.pr. followed by *H.G.V.* dates '3rd cent.' but as is made clear in the intr. of the ed.pr. the text was written certainly after 212 and prob. after 224; the handwriting suggests a date middle or late third century.
2.	Aur. Agathodaimon-Theon	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
3.	Aur. Agathodaimon s. of Potamon	priest, exegetes of Oxyrhynchos and the Small Oasis, councillor	*P.Mert.* 1 (1948) 26 (274)	Prob. identical with Aur. Agathodaimon s. of Potamon, exegetes in *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2569 (265). The identification made in the ed. with Aur. Euporos-Agathodaimon has been rightly rejected.
4.	Aur. Ailourion-Hesychios	hypomnematographos, councillor(?) of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, councillor, president	*P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3245 (297)	President in office 296/297. Identical with namesake in *P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 461 (290), where Ἡ[συχίου instead of Ἡ[συχίῳ should be restored, and *P.L.Bat.* 25 (1991) 59 (303), where he prob. functioned as *anametretes* of a toparchy. In both texts his titles are lost in a lacuna.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
5.	Aktiasion	councillor?, convoyor of collectors of wine	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.)	Membership council uncertain. In the text he has fled from his duty as convoyer. His councillorship is inferred by analogy with Theon, councillor, convoyer of collectors of barley, who occurs in a similar context in the same text. The supplement in l. 5 υἱοῦ, which could indicate that his father (whose name and titles are lost) was a magistrate as well, is conjectural.
6.	Alexandros	councillor	*P.Ryl.* 4 (1952) 691 (late 3rd cent.)	Alexandros has an unnamed daughter with a son (if the kin-terminology in this private letter is accurate).
7.	Sept. Alexandros	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1522 (after 222)	Sept. Alexandros has an unnamed grandson.
8.	Ammon	councillor	*P.Select* (1965) 5 (3rd cent.)	Oxyrhynchite origin uncertain, but likely. Ammon is called 'brother' by the writer, the councillor Maron, but it seems unlikely that this has any significance. Ammon has an unnamed son.
9.	Ailios Ammonios	president	*P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2341 (208)	President in office 207/208.
10.	Aur. Ammonios	gymnasiarch-designate, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1278 (214)	Poss. the same as (M.)Aur. Ammonios, gymnasiarch, president, councillor. Married to a woman named Aur. Dionysias-Chairemonis; the other persons mentioned in the text might be her siblings and her mother.
11.	Aur. Ammonios (*P.Oxy.* 77; *P.Oxy.* 3924, *S.B.* 11015) M.Aur. Ammo-	gymnasiarch, president (*P.Oxy.* 77; 3286; 3924) gymnasiarch, president (?), councillor	*P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3286 (222/223) *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 77 (223) *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3924	Poss. identical with Aur. Ammonios, gymnasiarch-designate, councillor. President in office 222/223. *H.G.V.* dates *S.B.* 11015 'first half third cent.', but if the reading [πρυτανεύσαν]τι is accepted (the basis for identification with the name-

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
	nios (*P.Oxy.* 3286)	(*S.B.* 11015)	(223) *S.B.* 12 (1976-1977) 11015 (after 222/223)	sakes), the text should date from after Ammonios' presidency.
12.	Aur. Ammonios	exegetes, *pompagogas*, councillor (*B.G.U.* 2118) exegetes (*P.Oxy.* 909)	*B.G.U.* 11 (1966) 2118 (223) *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 909 (225)	Poss. identical with Aur. Ammonios exegetes, councillor, treasurer of the councillors' funds. Father of a son named Aur. Serenos, without offices. Poss. related to Aur. Serenos s. of Ammonios, gymnasiarch.
13.	Aur. Ammonios	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4590 (231)	
14.	Aur. Ammonios	exegetes, councillor, treasurer of the councillors' funds	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1501 (212-269/270)	*H.G.V.* dates 'early 3rd cent'; for the date see *B.L.* 11. Poss. identical with Aur. Ammonios exegetes, *pompagogas*, councillor.
15.	Aur. Ammonios	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1562 (279-282)	Perh. brother of Demetrianos s. of Ploution, but the use of ἀδελφός is unlikely to be meaningful.
16.	Aur. Ammonios	magistrate, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3188 (300)	
17.	Aur. Ammonios-N.N.	councillor, bibliophylax	*S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7634 (249) *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1268 (250)	In both texts an alias-name is lost in a lacuna; more offices may lurk behind the 'however he is styled' formula. The *H.G.V.* dates *P.Oxy.* 1268 as '3rd cent.'. However, the text was written during Ammonios' term as bibliophylax; the reference to Mesore of the past sixth year is to 248/249.
18.	Aur. Amyntianos-Sarapion	councillor, bibliophylax	*S.B.* 8 (1967) 9878 (259)	Amyntianos is mentioned twice in the text, the first time with his alias-name, the second time with his councillorship.
19.	Aur. Aniketos s. of Ploutarchos	magistrate in charge of the conveyance of oxen, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3565 (245)	Poss. related to Aur. Horion s. of Aniketos, agonothetes, gymnasiarch, councillor and his family.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
20.	Antiochos-Dionysios	gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Stras.* 261) magistrate of Alexandria (*P.Oxy.* 102)	*P.Stras.* 4 (1963) 261 (296) *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 102 (306)	Deceased at the moment *P.Stras.* 261 was written. A daughter is named Aur. Antiochia-Dionysia. She occurs in both texts; hence the identification between the two men, despite the difference in titles (used posthumously in both cases).
21.	Aur. Antonios-Phileas	exegetes of Alexandria, gymnasiarch	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300)	Appearing as speaker in a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor.
22.	Aur. Apion s. of Diogenes	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
23.	Aur. Apion-Ammonios s. of Apion surnamed Pauseirion and Variana	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229)	His father, Apion surnamed Pauseirion, is prob. identical with the Apion surnamed Pauseirion of *P.Oxy.* 65 (1998) 4481 (179), where he is in the process of divorcing a woman named Ta...-Sarapous. The fact that in *P.Oxy.* 2473 a different mother's name is mentioned implies subsequent remarriage. This in turn suggests that Apion-Ammonios was born after 179. Apion-Ammonios is prob. identical with Aur. Apion-Ammonios of *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348 (224). Both there and in *P.Oxy.* 2473 he occurs together with Aur. Ptollion, s. of Amois s. of Sarapion and Didyme, kosmetes, councillor; they might therefore be (distant?) relatives—note also that in *P.Oxy.* 2473 they buy land together. The connection receives some further support from the fact that the probable son of the latter, Aur. Apion-Ptollion s. of Ptollion s. of Amois, kosmetes, councillor, bears the name Apion—though the name is common.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
24.	Aur. Apion-Ptollion s. of Ptollion s. of Amois (*P.Oxy.* 1703) Aur. Apion-Ptollion (*P.Ups.Frid.* 5)	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261) *P.Ups.Frid.* (1981) 5 (261)	Prob. son of Aur. Ptollion s. of Amois s. of Sarapion and Didyme, kosmetes, councillor. Poss. also related to Aur. Apion-Ammonios, kosmetes, councillor.
25.	Aur. Apion-Theonammon	gymnasiarch, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 457 (276)	See *B.L.* 11 for the date.
26.	Apolinarios	councillor, *pr( )*	*P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4592 (late 2nd-early 3rd cent.)	The interpretation and date of the text are much debated, see *B.L.* on *S.B.* 10 (1969) 10295 b (222?). Apolinarios might have been 'elder', president in office, or former-president. Apolinarios might also originate from Alexandria or Antinoopolis or a *metropolis* other than Oxyrhynchos. One of the suggestions is that he is identical with L. Sept. Aur. Sarapion-Apolinarios, president.
27.	Aur. Apollo...	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	Alias-name and/or one or more offices are lost in a lacuna.
28.	Aur. Apollonianos	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	Poss. related to Sarapion-Apollonianos, gymnasiarch, councillor.
29.	Apollonios	priest, exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2584 (211)	Apollonios is mentioned twice in the text, the first time without the priesthood.
30.	M.Aur. Apollonios s. of Demetrios-Psammis	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237)	Father of Aur. Apollonia, wife of M.Aur. Saras; maternal grandfather of Aur. Stratonike-Sosipatra and Aur. Apollonia-Dieus.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
31.	Aur. Apollonios	gymnasiarch, councillor, public banker	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1284 (250)	Apollonios is mentioned twice in the document, the first time without the gymnasiarchy.
32.	Aur. Apollonios	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	Poss. identical with Aur. Apollonios, agoranomos, councillor, see next entry, but the name is very common.
33.	Aur. Apollonios	agoranomos, councillor	*P.S.I.* 1 (1912) 74 (3rd cent.)	Poss. identical with Aur. Apollonios, agoranomos, councillor, see prev. entry, but the name is very common.
34.	Apollonios	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
35.	Aur. Apollonios	exegetes, councillor, bibliophylax	*P.Harr.* 1 (1936) 75 (249-251)	
36.	Apollonios	hypomnematographos, president	*P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3813 (3rd-4th cent.)	Apollonios is mentioned twice in the text, but only once as (former) president. Several ‘brothers’ are mentioned, prob. this is without significance. Prob. identical with the Apollonios mentioned in *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3814 and 3815 (3rd-4th cent.). In the absence of a more precise dating of *P.Oxy.* 3813, the possibility canvassed in the ed. that he is identical with Aur. Apollonios-Dionysios, gymnasiarch, councillor, president, is no more than just that.
37.	Apollonios s. of Ischyrion	exegetes, pompagogos, in charge of the *stemmata*, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2768 (bef. 269)	Cf. ed.pr. line 3-5n. for some possible identifications, none of them very attractive.
38.	Aur. Apollonios-Dionysios	gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Ups.Frid.* 6)	*P.Ups.Frid.* (1981) 6 (273) *P.Flor.* 1 (1906) 63	Poss. identical with Apollonios hypomnematographos, councillor. Poss. related to Aur. Dionysos-Apollonios, gymnasiarch, councillor, nykto-

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
		gymnasiarch, councillor, president (*P.Flor.* 63) president (*S.B.* 10555) hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, president, director of municipal finance (*P.Oxy.* 55) hypomnematographos of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, councillor president (*P.Laur.* 4. 155) [hypomnematographos, (councillor?) of Alexandria] gymnasiarch, president, councillor (*P.S.I.* 705) hypomnematographos, councillor of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, president, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 59)	(274 or 280) *S.B.* 10 (1969-1971) 10555 (after 282) *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 55 (283) *P.Laur.* 4 (1983) 155 (prob. 281-283 or 291/292) *P.S.I.* 6 (1920) 705 (late 3rd cent; prob. after 282/283) *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 59 (292)	strategos, though unlikely to be identical. President in office in *P.Flor.* 63. Both proposed dates of *P.Flor.* 63 present problems because in both years the presidency was occupied by someone else. Either 'year 5' was an error, or he did not occupy the presidency for a full year. President in office in 281/282, 282/283 and 291/292. *P.Laur.* 155, where he is *enarchos prytanis*, prob. dates from one of these years. *P.S.I.* 705, where he is former president, prob. dates from after 282/283. Apart from hypomnematographos (see *B.L.* 8) βουλευτῇ might also be supplied in the lacuna of *P.S.I.* 705 line 4, see the titulature in *P.Oxy.* 59.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
39.	Apollonios-Heraklas	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1693 (bef. 273 or 279)	Son is named Aur. Apion.[1]
40.	Aur. Apollonios-Klaudianos	president, gymnasiarch, eirenarch	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 80 (between 238-244)	President in office at the time of the document. Prob. related to Aur. Apollonios-Klaudianos, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3135 (ca 273/274?).
41.	Aur. Apollonios-Sarapadoros	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3110 (ca 253-257)	Offices may be lost in a lacuna. Due to a redating of *P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3507 (ca 308-312) the identifications proposed there in line 1-2n have become implausible.
42.	Apollophanes	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4438 (252)	Father of two sons: Aur. Theon-Kastor and Aur. Dioskourides, who are prob. minors at the time of the text. His unnamed wife had died shortly before the text was written. The identification with Apollophanes-Sarapammon, exegetes of Antinoopolis in *P.Turner* (1981) 41 (ca 249/250) hesitantly proposed in *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) p.22 no. 33 has little to commend itself. Because of the names of his sons, Apollophanes is prob. related to Aur. Dioskourides-Kastor, gymnasiarch, councillor. The latter might be his father.

[1] Sijpesteijn (1986) no. 545 took the titles to refer to the son, not to the father; this might be what the writer meant, but it is not what the text suggests: the titles are given in the genetive case.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
43.	Areion	scribe	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 59 (292)	
44.	Aur. Aristion	high priest, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 3606) (-) (*P.Oxy.* 964)	*P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3606 (ca 230-235) *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 964 (263).	'However he was styled' in *P.Oxy.* 964; past tense indicating he was dead by 263. Son of Aristion exegetes, s. of Tiron and Sarapous-Demetria in *P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229). Brother of Aur. Theon, gymnasiarch, councillor, s. of Aristion s. of Tiron.[2] Father of Aur. Theon-Eudaimon surnamed Aristion and Sarapous-Agathokleia.
45.	Aristion	syndikos	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 41 (ca 300)	
46.	Aur. Asklepiades	gymnasiarch, councillor, president, *dekaprotos* of the Middle Toparchy (*P.Oxy.* 3049) president (*P.Oxy.* 1418)	*P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1418 (247)	*P.Oxy.* 3049 contains two drafts of the same text; only one mentions the office of dekaprotos. President in office 246/247.
47.	Aur. Asklepiades	councillor, keeper of the peace	*P.Turner* (1981) 42 (3rd cent., after 212)[3]	Councillorship and Oxyrhynchite origin uncertain but likely. *H.G.V.* dates '3rd cent.'

[2] Cf. *P.Oxy.* 3606 line 13n: the Aristion and Theon that are mentioned in this document are not father and son, but brothers.

[3] Unrelated to the present list, lines 3-6 should read "from Aurelia Alexandra, daughter of N.N., with as mother N.N.-Theodora, daughter of N.N., former eutheniarch and kosmetes of the most glorious city of the Alexandrians". In the lacuna of line 3 a patronym (and poss. one or more offices) should therefore precede μητρός N.N., while the N.N. of line 4 is the maternal grandfather, not the father of Aur. Alexandria.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
48.	Aur. Asklepiades s. of Achillion (*P.Oxy.* 2477) Aur. Asklepiades (*P.Oxy.* 3930) Aur. Asklepiades- Achillion (*P.Oxy.* 3184)	hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 2477) hypomnematographos, president (*P.Oxy.* 3930) hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, councillor, twice president, supervisor of areas of the Lower Toparchy (*P.Oxy.* 3184)	*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2477 (289) *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3930 (290) *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3184 (296/297)	Variations in the name can be explained by assuming that his full name was Aur. Asklepiades-Achillion s. of Achillion. President in office 288/289 and 289/290. Prob. identical with Asklepiades s. of Achillion in *P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 461 (290). The possible identification with Aur. Asklepiades, deputy-strategos in *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 59 (292) and strategos in *P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2712 (292/293) should be rejected because the strategeia would have been mentioned in *P.Oxy.* 3184 and because it is uncertain whether strategoi were by this period already recruited locally. Due to a redating of *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1252 V° 2 (after 294/295) the suggestion of Bowman (1971) 136 n.22 to identify the unnamed president and the Asklepiades mentioned in that text with Aur. Asklepiades-Achillion has become less plausible.
49.	Aur. Athenaios-Herakleides	councillor (*P.Oslo* 3. 111) kosmetes, councillor, treasurer of the city funds (*P.Oxy.* 3177)	*P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235) *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3177 (247)	*P.Oslo* 3.111 mentions a son, Aur. Hermogenes-Eudaimon. The latter is prob. identical with Aur. Hermogenes-Eudaimon, exegetes, councillor, president.
50.	Aur. Bion-Ammonios	gymnasiarch, councillor, president	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1662 (246)	President in office 245/246.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
51.	Aur. Demetrianos s. of Ploution	gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Vindob.Sal.* 7) gymnasiarch, councillor, nyktostrategos (*P.Oxy.Hels.* 26)	*P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293) *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 26 (296)	Aur. Demetrianos s. of Ploution is in *P.Vindob.Sal.* 7 one of two *epitropoi* of the heirs a Gaios Ioulios Aurelios Diogenes. Prob. identical with Aur. Demetrianos s. of Ploution in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1562 (279-282) where in line 3 and perh. also in line 5-6 γυμν( ) and/or βουλ( ) may have been lost in the lacuna; μητρός is rather unlikely. Prob. also identical with Demetrianos s. of Ploution in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1542 (307); there a wife Taposiris-Amazonion is mentioned. Poss. identical with Demetrianos, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2796 (late 3rd-early 4th cent.), with Aur. Demestrianos, *dekaprotos* of parts of the Middle Toparchy in *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1260 (286) and with Demetrianos, *dekaprotos* of the Western Toparchy in *P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1204 (after Aug. 299).
52.	Aur. Demetrios-Alexandros	high priest, councillor, in charge of the distribution of seed	*P.Oxy.* 7 (1910) 1031 (228)	
53.	Aur. Demetrios-Zoilos	high priest, exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 911 (233 or 265)	
54.	Aur. Didymos	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
55.	Aur. Didymos-Antonios s. of Sarapammon s. of Phanias	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3049 (247)	Aur. Didymos-Antonios has three siblings: his brothers Kallineikos and Pallas(?)-Didymos and his sister Ammonous. His father, Sarapammon, has been gymnasiarch.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
56.	Aur. Didymos s. of Didymos	councillor, contractor for drawing of municipal water for public baths	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2569 (265)	
57.	Aur. Didymos-Dioskourides	exegetes, councillor, in charge of the stemmata	*P.Ryl.* 4 (1952) 599 (226)	Prob. identical with Aur. Didymos, exegetes, pompagogos, in charge of the stemmata of the *gerousia* in *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3101 (225/226) and *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3102 (ca 225/226). Poss. identical with Didymos-Dioskourides, father of N.N. in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1498 (bef. 299), though the chronology is strained.
58.	Aur. Didymos-Eudaimon	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3246 (298)	Father of a woman named Techosous-Eudaimonis, for whom see Nielsen (1994). Prob. identical with Didymos-Eudaimon in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1416 (after May 298); *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3307 (early 4th cent.) and poss. with Didymos, nomikarios in *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3788 (309).
59.	Tib. Klaudios Didymos-Herakleios	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1501 (212-269/270)	*H.G.V.* dates 'early 3rd cent'; for the date see *B.L.* 11. Prob. related to Tib. Klaudios Didymos 'and however he is styled', member of the Dionysion and the sacred club, victor at the games and exempt from taxation, gymnasiarch and eutheniarch of *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 908 (199).
60.	Diogenes	councillor	*B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1093 (265)	
61.	Aur. Diogenes s. of Harpokration	councillor of Alexandria, president, councillor	*P.S.I.* 13 (1949-1953) 1330 (after 272)	President in office at the time of the document. More offices may lurk behind the 'and however he is styled' formula.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
62.	Aur. Diogenes s. of Sarapammon	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2566 (225)	The text consists of two copies. Only in version ii Diogenes appears, as ‘associate’, συνεστώς, of a woman named Aur. Apollonarios, daughter of Zoilos, gymnasiarch. In this version they make their declaration together; they might therefore be married or be (distant) relatives. Poss. identical with Diogenes, exegetes, father of Herais in *P.Mich.* 18 (1996) 792 (221), though the latter Diogenes is more likely to be a generation older.
63.	Aur. Diogenes s. of Stephanos	high priest, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1697 (242)	A niece is named Aur. Chairemonis.
64.	Tib. Klaudios Diogenes	kosmetes, agonothetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1284 (250)	He has a homonymous son and a foster-child whose mother is called Aur. Ammonia daughter of N.N. and Techosous. For poss. identifications of the latter see Nielsen (1994) 135 n.21—though not very convincing.
65.	Sept. Diogenes-Agathodaimon	hypomnematographos, syndikos	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1414 (271/272) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in two council meetings; hence almost certainly councillor. More offices may lurk behind the ‘however he is styled’ formula.
66.	Aur. Dionysios	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
67.	Aur. Dionysios-Apollonios	gymnasiarch, councillor, nyktostrategos	*P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 26 (296)	Unlikely to be identical with Aur. Apollonios-Dionysios, gymnasiarch, councillor, president etc, because it is unlikely that the presidency would be omitted from the titles in *P.Oxy.Hels.* 26 and because there are no other certain cases of the reversal of alias-names. Poss. identical with Dionysios-Apollonios, minor gymnasiarch and grandson of Aur. Herodes s. of Apion gymnasiarch, councillor, but the chronology is strained and the names are common. Prob. identical with Dionysios-Ap[ollonios], appearing as speaker (?) in a council meeting in *P.Oxy.* 24 (1957) 2417 (after Nov. 286).
68.	Aur. Dionysios-Aphrodisios	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 977 (252)	
69.	Aur. Dionysotheon	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 41 (223/224)	Poss. identical with Aur. Dionysotheon, gymnasiarch in *P.Hamb.* 1 (1911-1924) 19 (225), though the omission of the councillorship in that text would be noteworthy. The identification with Aur. Sarapion-Dionysotheon, gymnasiarch, councillor in *P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2795 (250) is unattractive because of the difference in names (contra *P.Oxy.Hels.* 41 line 1n.). The identification with Dionysotheon, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1278 (214) is unlikely because the latter will have lived one or two generations earlier (contra Sijpesteijn (1986) ad no. 348).
70.	Dioskoros	president	*S.B.* 10 (1969-1971) 10555 (after 282)	President in 277/278.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
71.	Dioskoros	president	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 41 (ca 300)	President in office at the time of the document.
72.	Aur. Dioskoros (*P.Oxy.* 1031) Aur. Dioskoros s. of Apion (*B.G.U.* 1062)	agoranomos, councillor, in charge of the distribution of seed (*P.Oxy.* 1031) agoranomos, councillor (*B.G.U.* 1062)	*P.Oxy.* 7 (1910) 1031 (228) *B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1062 (236)	The father of Dioskoros, Apion, seems to be without offices or councillorship.
73.	Aur. Dioskourides-Achillion	gymnasiarch, councillor, bibliophylax	*P.Harr.* 1 (1936) 75 (249-251)	
74.	Aur. Dioskourides-Kastor	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3591 (219)	He occurs twice in the text, the second time as gymnasiarch ‘and however I am styled’. Prob. related to Apollophanes, exegetes, councillor because of the names of the latter’s sons: Aur. Theon-Kastor and Aur. Dioskourides. He might be their grandfather.
75.	Aur. Dioskourides-Ptolemaios	councillor, bibliophylax	*P.Oxy.* 19 (1948) 2231 (241)	
76.	Aur. Dioskourides-Sabinos	gymnasiarch, councillor, president, director of municipal finance (*P.Oxy.* 2109; *P.S.I.* 1070) president (*P.Oxy.* 1413)	*P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2109 (261) *P.S.I.* 9 (1929) 1070 (260/261 or 261/262) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	President in office in 260/261 and poss. in 261/262. Restore in *P.Oxy.* 1413 lines 5-6 Αὐρήλιος Διοσκουρίδης ὁ καὶ] [Σα]βεῖνος.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
77.	Aur. Epimachos	eutheniarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1637 (256-261)	Oxyrhynchite origin not certain but likely; Alexandria is also an option. Married to a woman named Iseis, d. of [....]i[.]philos, who possesses the *ius liberorum*.
78.	Eudaimon	president	*P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3925 (ca 245/246)	First name and/or praenomen are lost in a lacuna. President in office at the time of the document. The identification with Sept. Eudaimon, gymnasiarch, councillor, public banker, is unconvincing because the omission of the presidency would be unlikely (cf. ed.pr.).
79.	Eudaimon	president	*S.B.* 10 (1969-1971) 10555 (after 282)	President in 278/279.
80.	Eudaimon	exegetes	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (ca 280-300)	Appearing as a speaker in a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor.
81.	Sept. Eudaimon (*P.Oxy.* 2271, 2854, 3597, *P.Oxy.Hels.* 25) Sept.Aur. Eudaimon (*P.Oxy.* 4439)	gymnasiarch, councillor, public banker (*P.Oxy.* 2271) gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 2854, 3597, 4439) gymnasiarch (councillor?, president?) (*P.Oxy.Hels.* 25)	*P.Oxy.* 20 (1952) 2271 (mid. 3rd cent.) *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2854 (248) *P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4439 (258/259) *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3597 (260) *P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 25 (264)	If the conjecture in *P.Oxy.Hels.* 25 is correct, president in office in 263/264. Son of Sept. Serenos, exegetes, president. Brother of a woman named Aur. Apia who occurs in *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255). Prob. identical with Sept. Eudaimon, kosmetes of Alexandria, s. of Sept. Serenos (with offices left open in the original) in *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3612 (272-275). Poss. identical with Sept. Eudaimon, father of Isidora, in *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1649 (after 279/280). Prob. related to Sept. Serenos-Ischyrion, exegetes, who might be his son.
82.	Aur. Eudaimon-Helladios	magistrate, councillor of Alexandria (*P.Oxy.* 2904)	*P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2904 (272) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1412	In *P.Oxy.* 2904 the local career of Aur. Eudaimon-Helladios may lurk behind the 'however he is styled' formula used there. President in office at

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
		eutheniarch, kosmetes, exegetes, hypomnematographos, councillor of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 1412)	(ca 279-281)	the time of *P.Oxy.* 1412. Aur. Eudaimon-Helladios, gymnasiarch, councillor, bibliophylax in M.*Chr.* (1912) 196 (309) and *strategos* in *P.Oxy.* 60 (1994) 4076 (320) is prob. a homonymous son. Aur. Dioskoros-Helladios, gymnasiarch, councillor and president in *P.Oxy.* 65 (1998) 4491 (307) is perh. another son.
83.	Aur. Euporos-Agathodaimon	kosmetes, exegetes, hypomnematographos of Alexandria, president, councillor, president (*B.G.U.* 1073) kosmetes, exegetes, eutheniarch, hypomnematographos of Alexandria, exegetes, president, councillor, president (*S.B.* 13034) eutheniarch, kosmetes, exegetes and hypomnematographos of Alexandria, exegetes, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 3568)	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272) *B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1073 (274) *S.B.* 16 (1985-1988) 13034 (273/274) *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3568 (ca 273/274)	President in office in 273/274. Appears as ‘Euporos-Agathodaimon and however he is styled’ speaking in a council meeting in *P.Oxy.* 1413. Prob. identical with Euporos-Agathodaimon in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1496 (after March 280). Poss. identical with Euporos in *P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2612 (288-290). Poss. identical with N.N. exegetes of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, councillor, president.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
84.	Tib. Klaudios Flamma	councillor	*P.S.I.* 8 (1927) 940 (266)	Deceased by the time the text was written. Daughter is named Aur. Arsinoe and has the right of children.
85.	Aur. Geminos(?)-Silvanos s. of Demetrios	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261)	Twice married, to a woman named Isidora-Dionysia and to a woman named Apia-Tapa....., d. of Xois. Three sons: Aur. Demetrios, victor at the sacred ephebic games, Heliodoros and Silvanos.
86.	M.(?)Aur. Germanos s. of Symmachos	councillor	*P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1251 (252)	Germanos has Antinoite citizenship and has several athletic titles.
87.	Germanos	president	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3189 (late 3rd cent.-early 4th cent.)	President-designate at the time the document was written.
88.	Aur. Hatres	exegetes, pompagagos, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9161 (212-269) *S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9162 (212-269)	
89.	Aur. Hera[	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	One office may be lost in a lacuna.
90.	Aur. Herakleides	exegetes, councillor, epimeletes of a fort	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1252 R° 2 (after 294/295)	Acc. to *P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3930 (290) poss. identical with Herakleides, s. of Sarapion, exegetes, mentioned there as deceased, but due to a redating of *P.Oxy.* 1252 R° this is no longer chronologically possible.
91.	Aur. Herakleides s. of Dorion	agoranomos, councillor, treasurer of the council funds	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233)	
92.	Aur. Herakleides-Demetrios	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1697 (242)	Son is named Aur. Timagenes-Herakleides, victor at the sacred ephebic games.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
93.	Aur. Herakleides-Dionysios	councillor, dekaprotos	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1444 (248/249)	
94.	Herakleios or Herakles	president	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3183 (292)	Former president at the time of the document. For Ἡρακλήου either read Ἡρακλέιου, see H.C. Youtie, *Scriptiunculae* 2 (Amsterdam 1973) 817 and 819, or for Ἡρακλήου nom. Ἡρακλῆς see F.T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri* (Milan 1981) 71-72.
95.	Hermias s. of Sotas	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Col.* 10 (1996) 265 (206-212)	Kosmetes-designate at the time of the text. Alexandrian citizen. Maternal grandfather is named Hermias and belongs to the Sosikosmian tribe and the Althaian deme.
96.	Aur. Hermias	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3638 (220)	First married to a woman named Tayris, later to a woman named Tanetbeus. Father of a son named M.Aur. Chairemon (m. Tayris), and a daughter named Aur. Tetseiris (m. Tanetbeus). There are further unnamed children (at least 2, m. Tayris).

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
97.	Aur. Hermogenes-Eudaimon	exegetes, councillor, president(?)	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 907 (276)	Dead by Epeiph 276. The office of president depends on restoration, and it is not completely certain that he was president in office at the time he wrote the document. If so, he was president from 275 to Epeiph 276. Prob. identical with Aur. Hermogenes-Eudaimon, s. of Aur. Athenaios-Herakleides, kosmetes, councillor. He is married to Aur. Isidora-Priska, *matrona stolata*. He has a nephew named Didymos. Aur. Hermogenes-Eudaimon has 3 sons and 2 daughters: the Aur. Herminos, Horion, Herakleides, Ptolemais, Didyme. Aur. Ptolemais is poss. identical with Aur. Ptolemais 'and however she is styled' in *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1690 (287) and hence the owner of some literary papyri. See Bagnall (1992b) for the family.
98.	Aur. Herodes	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.S.I.* 1 (1912) 79 (216/217)	
99.	Aur. Herodes s. of Apion	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1274 (mid. 3rd cent.)	Prob. identical with Herodes, s. of Apion, gymnasiarch in *S.B.* 12 (1976) 11233 (247). His daughter Aur. Aristous is married to Achillion-Apollonios, royal scribe of the territory of the Alexandrians. His grandson, Dionysios-Apollonios, is a minor and gymnasiarch. The latter is poss. identical with Aur. Dionysios-Apollonios gymnasiarch, councillor, *nyktostrategos*, but the chronology is strained and the names are common.
100.	Aur. Heron	gymnasiarch, councillor, protostates	*P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
101.	Aur. Heron-Agathodaimon	councillor	*P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1249 (265)	
102.	Aur. Hierakion-Dionysios	gymnasiarch, president, councillor (*S.B.* 9833 and 13367) gymnasiarch, president, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 1104) gymnasiarch, councillor president, president (*P.Oxy.* 2665)	*S.B.* 8 (1965-1967) 9833 (299) *S.B.* 18 (1993) 13367 (298-301) *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1104 (305/306) *P.Oxy.* 33 (1968) 2665 (305/306)	President in office bef. 298/299 and in 305/306. In *S.B.* 9833 line 6 read γυ]μ(νασιαρχήσαντι) (as in the ed.pr.) instead of ὁ]μ(οίως). In *P.Oxy.* 2665 line 4 supply πρυτανεύσαντι ἐνάρχῳ πρ]υτάνι.
103.	Hierax s. of Hermeias	president	*S.B.* 10 (1969-1971) 10555 (after 282)	President in 280/281. Poss. identical with and prob. related to Hierax s. of Hermeias, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1416 (after May 298).
104.	Hierax-Sarapion	gymnasiarch, president, councillor	*P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1249 (265)	Former president at the time of the document. Father of a woman named Didyme-Antiocheia, who is married to Aur. Theon-Horigenes, gymnasiarch, councillor.
105.	Aur. Horion	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
106.	Aur. Horion s. of Aniketos	agonothetes, gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2711 (271)	Horion has a nephew named Aniketos-Remmios, who has 3 children: the Aur. A......, Remmios and Eudaimonis. Poss. related to Aur. Aniketos s. of Ploutarchos, magistrate in charge of the conveyance of oxen, councillor.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
107.	Sept. Horion-Diogenes		*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1416 (after May 298)	Makes a proposal about advances from the councillor's funds, to be discussed at a council meeting, hence prob. councillor. Prob. related to and poss. identical with Sept. Horion-Diogenes, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2924 (3rd cent.).
108.	Aur. Horion-Sarapion	hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, president	*P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3246 (298)	Former president at the time of the document.
109.	Aur. Isidoros	high priest, councillor, eirenarch, deputy-president	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1662 (246)	Deputy-president in 245/246.
110.	Ioulianos-Dioskourides	exegetes	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker at a council meeting; hence almost certainly councillor. Prob. related to and poss. identical with Aur. Ioulianos-Dioskourides, hypomnematographos, president, gymnasiarch, councillor, *protostates* of the Southern Toparchy, although the titles diverge.
111.	Aur. Ioulianos-Dioskourides	hypomnematographos, councillor of Alexandria, president, councillor (*P.Vindob.Sal.* 7) hypomnematographos, president, gymnasiarch, councillor, protostates of the Southern Topar-	*P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293) *S.B.* 6 (1958-1963) 9502 (296)	Presidency bef. 293. Prob. related to and poss. identical with Aur. Ioulianos-Dioskourides, exegetes, although the titles diverge. Poss. identical with Aur. N.N.-Dioskourides, hypomnematographos, councillor. Related to Aur. Dioskourides-Ioulianos, logistes, who might be his son, and Flavios Ioulianos, logistes, who might be his grandson; for both see *P.Oxy.* 54 (1987) app. 1; for the possibility of a fourth generation, see *P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4606 (361) n3 and 16: N.N.-

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
		chy (*S.B.* 9502)		Ioulianos and Aur. Gennadios, both councillor.
112.	Gaios Ioulios Diogenes, s. of Gaios Ioulios Tiron (*P.Oxy.* 3498) Gaios Ioulios Diogenes (*S.B.* 10555) Gaios Ioulios Aur. Diogenes (*P.Vindob.Sal.* 7)	hypomnematographos (*P.Oxy.* 3498) president (*S.B.* 10555) hypomnematographos (*P.Vindob.Sal.* 7)	*P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3498 (274) *S.B.* 10 (1969-1971) 10555 (after 282) *P.Vindob.Sal.* (1976) 7 (293)	President in 279/280. Prob. identical with the anonymous president in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1496 (after March 280). The latter text mentions an unnamed son; cf. the minor heirs mentioned in *P.Vindob.Sal.* 7. Prob. identical with Ioulios Diogenes(?) in *P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 461 (290). If so, deceased bef. 290; at any rate dead by 293. In *P.Oxy.* 3498 both Alexandrian and Oxyrhynchite offices have disappeared in a lacuna; the restoration of the Alexandrian one tentatively proposed in 1-2n is confirmed by *P.Vindob.Sal.* 7. His father, Gaios Ioulios Tiron, was an officeholder in two cities, one of them Oxyrhynchos, the other city unknown but prob. not Alexandria. He was dead by 274. The father is prob. identical with Gaios Ioulios(?) Tiron in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1537 (mid 3rd cent.)[4]. A relative, prob. his uncle, is named Valerianos. Poss. identical with and prob. related to the owner of vineyards Ioulios Diogenes in *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1141 (3rd cent.)[5] and *P.Alex.* (1964) 13 (3rd cent.)[6]. Poss. identical with and prob. related to Gaios Ioulios Diogenes in *P.Harr.* 1 (1936) 140 (3rd cent.). Borkowski, *Cd'E* 43 (1968) 329 also refers to the unpublished P.Berol. inv. 17367.

[4] The text is dated by the ed.pr., followed by *H.G.V.*, as late 2nd-early 3rd cent., presumably on the basis of the handwriting. The identification

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
113.	Gaios Kalpournios Loukios(?)	gymnasiarch, president	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3173 (222)	See Bowman (2001) no 5. Prob. related to the other Kalpournioi mentioned. Poss. identical with Loukios Kalpournios Gaios eutheniarch, kosmetes, councillor of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, president, and Kalpournios Gaios president, though the cognomen is uncertain and the reversal of names would be remarkable.[7] President in office in 221/222. *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3176 (222-234) will prob. have been addressed to the same man. For a possible father, see Bowman (2001) on Kalpournios Firmos no. 2.

suggests a later date, however. A second identification in line 7 may suggest likewise: Vibios Poublios may be identical with Vibios Poublios, honourably discharged veteran, former *officialis* of the prefect of Egypt, former (= deceased) councillor of Alexandria in *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1646 (268 and 270).

[5] The mentioning of χωϱ(ίου) Γαϊανοῦ in *P.Oxy.* 8 1141 (with the comm. in 6n.—adjective formed from Gaios?) might perhaps support the identification, though coincidence cannot be ruled out.

[6] If the persons are identical, both orders for wine should be dated in the second half of the third cent., bef. 293.

[7] For the family see Bowman (2001). Given the numerous namesakes and the fact that many appear in undated contexts, caution is warranted in making identifications. Bowman proposes (with all due caution) to identify the three men. A less economical but also a more cautious interpretation is that we have two men, most likely brothers: Gaios Kalpournios Loukios(?) (Bowman no 5) and (Loukios) Kalpournios Gaios (Bowman no 6 and 7). Gaios Kalpournios Firmos (Bowman no 8) would then be a third brother.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
114.	Loukios Kalpournios Gaios	eutheniarch, kosmetes, councillor of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, president	*P.Oxy.* 34 (1968) 2723 (first half 3rd cent.)[8]	See Bowman (2001) no. 7. Prob. related to the other Kalpournioi mentioned. Prob. identical with Kalpournios Gaios, president and poss. with Gaios Kalpournios Loukios(?) gymnasiarch, president. President in office at the time of the document. A minor son is called Loukios Kalpournios Firmos. For a possible father, see Bowman (2001) on Kalpournios Firmos no. 2.
115.	Kalpournios Gaios	president	*P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3606 (ca 230-235)	See Bowman (2001) no. 6. Prob. related to the other Kalpournioi mentioned. Prob. identical with Loukios Kalpornios Gaios eutheniarch, kosmetes, councillor of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, president and poss. with Gaios Kalpournios Loukios(?) gymnasiarch, president. President in office during the first months of 228/229. For a possible father, see Bowman (2001) on Kalpournios Firmos no. 2.
116.	Gaios Kalpournios Firmos	president	*S.B.* 16 (1985-1988) 12494 (222-235)	See Bowman (2001) no. 8. Prob. related to the other Kalpournioi mentioned. Prob. president in office at the time of the document. For a possible father, see Bowman (2001) on Kalpournios Firmos no. 2.

[8] The text is dated in the ed., followed by *H.G.V.*, 'third century'. But the change of 'Apollonia-Harpokratiaina, d. of Publios and Apollonia, from the city of the Oxyrhynchoi' into 'Aurelia Apollonia-Harpokratiaina, ἀστὴ ὡς ἐν Ptolemaios in the Thebaid' must have occurred early in the third century—note the added 'Aurelia'. As Delia (1991) 18 writes, ἀστή refers to citizenship of Ptolemaios, not to that of Alexandria (contra the commentary in the ed.pr.), though she creates new confusion by saying that Ptolemais was the original residence. The narrowing in date might offer some additional support for the identication with Kalpournios Gaios, president; if accepted, the document in all likelihood dates from the attested presidency of 228/229.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
117.	Aur. Korneli-anos	president	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 891 (294) *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3297 (294)	President in office 293/294. He carries the title of διασημότατος, *vir perfectissimos* (for which see ed. of *P.Oxy.* 3297 with *Cod.Theod.* 12.1.5). Poss. related to Aur. Achillion s. of Kornelianos, president.
118.	Aur. Kronios	exegetes(?), pompagogos, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*P.Oxy.* 18 (1941) 2186 (260)	
119.	Kronios-Nepotianos	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1200 (266)	
120.	M.Aur. Leon-ides-Nikoboulos	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
121.	Aur. Lypros	eutheniarch, councillor, kosmetes, hypomnematographos of Alexandria, exegetes, councillor, president	*P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 85 (273)	President in office 272/273.
122.	Maron	councillor	*P.Select* (1965) 5 (3rd cent.)	Maron writes a personal letter to the councillor Ammon. He calls him his 'brother', but it seems unlikely that this has any significance.
123.	Maximos	priest, exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 56 (203)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
124.	Aur. Melas s. of Melas	councillor	*S.B.* 20 (1997) 14681 (later 3rd cent.)	Married to Aur. Demetria-Tamaois, d. of Aur. Demetrios s. of Aur. Ammon and Didyme and of Tamaois. Prob. related to and poss. identical with Melas s. of Melas, phylarch in *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3295 (285).
125.	Melas s. of Theon	exegetes, pompagogos, councillor, in charge of the epikri sis	*P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 457 (276)	For the date see *B.L.* 11.
126.	Menelaos	syndikos	*P.Oxy.* 24 (1957) 2407 (late 3rd cent.)	
127.	Aur. Mounatios	agoranomos, exegetes, gymnasiarch, councillor, president	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2569 (265)	President in office 265/266. Prob. related to Aur. Theon-Mounatios, councillor, though unlikely to be identical.
128.	Aur. Neikias-Dionysios	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250) *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3563 (225-230)	The reading Neikias in *P.Oxy.* 3563 depends on restoration. Poss. identical with Neikias agoranomos in *P.Mich.* 11 (1971) 614 (ca 258/259). The ref. to the Neikias in *B.G.U.* 11 (1966) 2130 (3rd cent.) is gratuitous: no office is mentioned and the text lacks a precise date.
129.	Neilos	councillor, appointed epimeletes	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
130.	Aur. Pasion-Apollonios	president, gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Erl.* 18) gymnasiarch, president, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 2854)	*P.Erl.* (1942) 18 (248) *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2854 (248)	President in office 248/249. Poss. identical with Aur. Pasion-N.N., gymnasiarch and euthenarch in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1418 (247); a young son might have been mentioned there.Poss. identical with Aur. Pasion-Apollonios s. of Ana[.......]-Zoilos in *P.Oxy.* 20 (1952) 2271 (mid 3rd cent.); the arrangements suggest he is dead by the time the text was written. Three children are mentioned in the text: the Aur. Herakleianos, Pasion and Sabeina.
131.	Aur. Pauleinos s. of Neilammon	exegetes, councillor	*P.S.I.* 3 (1914) 182 (234)	One more office or an alias-name of the father may have disappeared in the lacuna.
132.	Aur. Pekyllos-Theon	president (*P.Oxy.* 3606) gymnasiarch, president (*P.Oslo.* 111) gymnasiarch, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 3048)	*P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3606 (ca 230-235) *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235) *P.Oxy.* 42 (1974) 3048 (246)	Prob. identical with M.Aur. Pekyllos-Theon, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1526 (222/223). President in office in A.D 230/231 and in 234/235.
133.	Aur. Peteuris s. of Kollouthos	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.S.I.* 10 (1932) 1101 (271)	
134.	Phanias s. of Saras	high priest, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2768 (bef. 269)	
135.	Aur. Phanias	gymnasiarch, councillor	*S.B.* 16 (1985-1988) 12494 (222-235)	
136.	Aur. Philippos	kosmetes, exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 20 (1952) 2278 (mid 3rd cent.)	Councillorship uncertain but likely. A son is named Aur. Sarapion-Dionysios.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
137.	Philoumenos(?)-Phili...	-	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300)	Occurs as speaker in a report of a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor. Offices are lost in a lacuna. Second name prob. Philippos or Philiskos.
138.	Aur. Plotinos s. of Eudaimon(?)	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3802 (296)	Poss. identical with Plotinos s. of Eudaimon in *P.Oxy.* 55 (1988) 3811 (3rd cent.).
139.	Aur. Ploutarchos	councillor	*P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235)	Poss. identical with Aur. Ploutarchos, agoranomos, councillor.
140.	Aur. Ploutarchos	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	Poss. identical with Aur. Ploutarchos, councillor.
141.	Aur. Ploutarchos	gymnasiarch, councillor, protostates	*P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296)	
142.	Aur. Ploutarchos-Ammonios	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Mich.* 11 (1971) 610 (282)	
143.	Aur. Ploution-Origenes	exegetes, councillor, dekaprotos	*P.S.I.* 5 (1917) 461 (290)	
144.	Antonios Priskos	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3175 (233)	Deceased at the time of the text. The text mentions unnamed heirs.
145.	Ptolemaios	gymnasiarch	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in a council meeting; hence almost certainly councillor.
146.	Ptolemaios-Herakleides (*P.Oxy.* 70) Aur. Ptolemaios-Herakleides (*P.Oxy.* 3171)	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 70 (212-213) *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
147.	Aur. Ptolemaios-Zeuxianos	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.Hels.* (1979) 24 (217)	
148.	Ptolemaios s. of Damarion	high priest	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.)	Appearing in a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor.
149.	Ptoleminos-Sarmates	exegetes, councillor, conveyor of chaff	*P.Oxy.* 67 (2001) 4597 (294)	Identical with Ptoleminos-Sarmates, exegetes in *P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 891 (294) and Ptoleminos-Sarmates, epimeletes of chaff in *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 43 R° (295)—see *P.Oxy.* 4597 for the equation of the offices. Sarmates s. of Ptoleminos, epimeletes of chaff, also occurring in *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 43 R° (295), might be a close relative. *P.Oxy.* 63 (1996) 4383 (384) 4n lists poss. relatives of the late fourth cent. and later, but no certain connections can be established.
150.	Aur. Ptollion s. of Amois s. of Sarapion and Didyme	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229)	Prob. identical with Ptollion s. of Amois, kosmetes in *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1703 (ca 261); restore in l. 4 ʼΑμόϊτος instead of .ι̣ξ̣ι̣[.]τος. If so, his son is Aur. Apion-Ptollion s. of Ptollion, kosmetes, councillor. Prob. identical with Aur. Ptollion of *P.Oxy.* 22 (1954) 2348 (224). Both there and in *P.Oxy.* 2473 he occurs together with Aur. Apion-Ammonios, kosmetes, councillor; they might therefore be (distant) relatives—note also that in *P.Oxy.* 2473 they buy land together.
151.	M.Aur. Rodienos	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	More offices may lurk behind the 'however I am styled' formula.
152.	Sarapion-N.N.	high priest, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237)	Designate high priest at the time of the document.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
153.	Aur. Sarapion	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	
154.	Aur. Sarapion-Apeis	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 977 (252)	
155.	Aur. Sarapion-Agathos Daimon	gymnasiarch	*P.Oxy.* 58 (1991) 3925 (ca 245/246)	Councillorship not certain but probable.
156.	L.Sept. Aur. Sarapion-Apolinarios	president	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 890 (234-238)	President in office at the time of the document. More offices may lurk behind the 'however I am styled' formula. Poss. identical with Apolinarios, councillor, *presbeutes* or president.
157.	Aur. Sarapion-Apollonianos	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2137 (226) *S.B.* 1 (1913-1915) 5806 (235)	Sarapion-Apollonianos 2 in Moioli (1987). Prob. identical with homonymous strategos of Arsinoite and Hermopolite nome, for which see also Bastianini and Whitehorne (1987) s.v. His father is Sarapion-Apollonianos 1, gymnasiarch. There are three children: an anonymous son deceased at a young age, a daughter named Ammonous and Aur. Spartiates-Chairemon, gymnasiarch, councillor; see there for further descendants, among them his grandson Sarapion-Apollonianos 3.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
158.	Aur. Sarapion-Apollonianos	gymnasiarch, councillor:	*P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1249 (265)	Sarapion-Apollonianos 3 in Moioli (1987); see there for further refs. Grandson of Aur. Sarapion-Apollonianos 2. Son of Aur. Spartiates-Chairemon, gymnasiarch, councillor and Aur. Dioskouriaina-Sabeina, d. of Dioskourides, eutheniarch and councillor of Alexandria. Brother of a man named Spartiates-Pausanias and a woman named Apollonarion. The latter married a man named Aur. Epimachos 'and however he was styled', brother of Aur. Severos, gymnasiarch, councillor and got a son named Aur. Epimachos, gymnasiarch.
159.	Aur. Sarapion-Dionysotheon (*P.Coll.Youtie* 65, *P.Oxy.* 2795) Aur. Sarapion-Dionysotheon, s. of Sept. Epimachos, eutheniarch of Alexandra (*P.Oxy.* 4438)	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Coll.Youtie* 1 (1976) 65 (after May 241) *P.Oxy.* 36 (1970) 2795 (250) *P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4438 (252)	Prob. identical with Aur. Sarapion-Dionysotheon in *P.Laur.* 4 (1983) 156 (257) and with Aur. Sarapion-Dionysotheon, father of Aur. Sept. N.N. in *S.B.* 20 (1997) 15194 (252). *P.Oxy.* 4438 mentions a sister by the same parents, Aur. Kasiana-Herais. The father is prob. identical with Sept. Epimachos, gymnasiarch in *P.Genf.* 2 (1986) 116 (247). For further discussion see Wartenberg (1992).
160.	Aur. Sarapion-Philoxenos	gymnasiarch, deputy-president	*P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2130 (267)	Deputy-president in 266/267.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
161.	Sarapion s. of Alexandros	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1526 (222/223)	
162.	Saras	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 19 (1948) 2240 (after April 211)	Poss. identical with Aur. Saras, councillor.[9]
163.	Aur. Saras	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1634 (222 (?))	Poss. identical with Saras, councillor.
164.	M.Aur. Saras, s. of M.Aur. Dio-genes-Heliodoros (*P.Oxy.* 1114) Saras (*Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173, *P.Oxy.* 2849)	gymnasiarch, coun-cillor (*P.Oxy.* 1114) gymnasiarch, coun-cillor of Alexandria (*Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173) magistrate (*arxas*) of Alexandria and of Oxyrhynchos (*P.Oxy.* 2849)	*P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1114 (237) *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254) *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849 (296)	Alive in *P.Oxy.* 1114 and prob. in *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (note the present tense in 'how-ever he is styled'); in all likelihood dead by the time of *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2849. In *P.Oxy.* 1114 gymnasiarch, councillor of Oxyrhynchos; this lo-cal career may lurk behind the 'however he is styled' formula used in *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173. His father is eutheniarch and councillor of Alexandria 'and however he is styled'. Saras is married to Aur. Apollonia, d. of M.Aur. Apollo-nius s. of Demetrius-Psammis, gymnasiarch and councillor. He declares her death in *P.Oxy.* 1114. Two daughters survive her: Aur. Stratonike-Sosipatra and Aur. Apollonia-Dieus. Both appear as well in *Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254), the latter also in *P.Oxy.* 2849. The former and her father might possibly be identical with or related to Stratonike and N.N., Antinoite citizen(?), gym-nasiarch, councillor, though very little of the

[9] If so, it is possible that the estate-accounts of *P.Oxy.* 2240 concern the estate of Klaudia Isidora-Apia, for whom see briefly Rowlandson (1996) 114-115.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
				names survive and Antinoite citizenship is not attested for Saras. Contrary to the suggestion of Rowlandson (1996) 113 n.47, the Saras in *P.Oxy.* 17 (1927) 2129 (205/206?) is unlikely to be identical: even if he was not a villager, his daughters were born earlier.
165.	Sekoundos s. of Sekoundos	high priest	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor. Poss. identical with and prob. related to Aur. Sekoundos-Apollonios, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis
166.	Aur. Sekoundos-Apollonios	councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*P.Turner* (1981) 38 (274/5 or 280/281)	Prob. one office lost in lacuna. Poss. identical with and prob. related to Sekoundos s. of Sekoundos. Poss. identical with N.N., councillor, in charge of the epikrisis in *S.B.* 22 (2001) 15626 (276-282(?)); the latter text may date from the same term of office as *P.Turner* 38.
167.	Aur. Sept. Serenos (*P.Coll.Youtie* 65) Sept. Serenos (*P.Oxy.* 2854, 3596) Serenos (*P.Oxy.* 4439)	exegetes, president (*P.Coll.Youtie* 65, *P.Oxy.* 2854, 3596) - (*P.Oxy.* 4439)	*P.Coll.Youtie* 1 (1976) 65 (after May 241) *P.Oxy.* 38 (1971) 2854 (248) *P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3596 (ca 240-255) *P.Oxy.* 64 (1997) 4439 (258/259)	Former president at the time of *P.Coll.Youtie* 65 (and later texts). Father of Sept. Eudaimon, gymnasiarch, councillor and of Aur. Apia. Prob. identical with Sept. Serenos (with offices left open in the original), father of Sept. Eudaimon, kosmetes of Alexandria, in *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3612 (272-275). *P.Oxy.* 3596 was dated by the ed.pr. and *H.G.V.* as 219-255, but on prosopographical grounds this can be limited to ca 240-255. For discussions of the family see further Cockle (1981) 92, Rowlandson (1996) 113.
168.	Aur. Serenos	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
169.	Serenos s. of Ammonios	gymnasiarch	*P.Oxy*. 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in a council meeting; hence almost certainly councillor. Poss. related to Ammonios, exegetes, *pompagogas*, councillor and his son Serenos.
170.	Sept. Serenos-Ischyrion	exegetes	*P.Oxy*. 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in a council meeting; hence almost certainly councillor. Prob. related to Sept.(Aur.) Eudaimon, gymnasiarch, councillor, president(?), who might be his father.
171.	Aur. Seuthes	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 135 (286-293)	Prob. related to and poss. identical with Aurelios Seuthes-Horion, gymnasiarch and logistes, for which see *P.Oxy*. 54 (1987) app. 1.
172.	Aur. Severos	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261) *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 70 (272/273 or 278/279)	That the persons in the two texts are identical is not certain, but it seems likely. Brother of Aur. Epimachos 'and however he was styled'; the latter was married to Apollonarion, a member of the family of Sarapion-Apollonios and was dead by 260/261, leaving a minor son: Aur. Epimachos, gymnasiarch. The brothers are poss. related to Severos and Epimachos, sons of Philosophos, acting as gymnasiarchs in *P.Oxy*. 12 (1916) 1413 (272), but cannot be identical, as Epimachos had died more than a decade earlier.
173.	Simillis	councillor, eutheniarch	*P.Col*. 10 (1996) 273 (204/205)	Oxyrhynchite origin not certain but likely.
174.	Aur. Sokrates	gymnasiarch, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*S.B*. 6 (1958-1963) 9161 (212-269) *S.B*. 6 (1958-1963) 9162 (212-269)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
175.	Aur. Spartiates-Chairemon	gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Ryl.* 4 683, *P.Oxy.* 3290, *P.Coll.Youtie* 67)	*P.Ryl.* 4 (1952) 683 (244) *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3290 (258-260) *P.Coll.Youtie* 2 (1976) 67 (260/261)	Spartiates-Chairemon 18 in Moioli (1987); see there for further refs. Prob. identical with homonymous strategos of Hermopolite nome. Son of Aur. Sarapion-Apollonianos (2), gymnasiarch, councillor; grandson of Sarapion-Apollonianos 1, gymnasiarch. Married to Aur. Dioskouriana-Sabeina, d. of Dioskourides, eutheniarch and councillor of Alexandria. Three children are known: Aur. Sarapion-Apollonianos 3, gymnasiarch, councillor; a son named Spartiates-Pausanias, a daughter named Apollonarion. The latter married a man named Aur. Epimachos 'and however he was styled', the brother of Aur. Severos, gymnasiarch, councillor. They had a son Aur. Epimachos, gymnasiarch.
176.	Syrion-Eustochios	gymnasiarch (*P.Oxy.* 3139) gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 3302)	*P.Oxy.* 43 (1976) 3139 (late 3rd-early 4th cent.) *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3302 (300/301)[10]	Deceased at the time of *P.Oxy.* 3302. Father of a woman named Aur. Serenilla, who in *P.Oxy.* 3139 divorces from a man named Aur. Thonis-Dioskourides, while in *P.Oxy.* 3302 she mentions her right of children, implying that her marriage had produced at least three children.

[10] It seems likely that the petition of the Serenilla in *P.Oxy.* 3302 should be read in the context of her divorce documented in *P.Oxy.* 3139. If so, *P.Oxy.* 3139 must have preceded *P.Oxy.* 3302. In such a scenario Syrion-Eustochios may have become councillor after his daughter's divorce, and subsequently have died. But title omission can also be at work, and it is not completely certain that he was alive at the time of the first text.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
177.	Tiron-Apollonios	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1416 (after May 298)	Poss. identical with Tiron-Apollonios in *P.Oxy.* 49 (1982) 3499 (ca 298?) and with Tiron-Apollonios in *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1515 (after 258/259).
178.	Aur. Themistokles-Dioskourides	hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, councillor, president (*P.Oxy.* 3187) hypomnematographos, gymnasiarch, councillor, president, president (*P.Oxy.* 3188) gymnasiarch, president (*P.Oxy.* 103)	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300) *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3188 (300) *P.Oxy.* 1 (1898) 103 (316)	President in office 299/300 and 300/301. Possibly identical with Aur. N.N.-Dioskourides, hypomnematographos, councillor, cf. *B.L.* 8 and 9. Bowman (1971) 171 refers further to *P.Oxy.* ined. 6 in which he occurs as former president and deputy-president; this text seems still unpublished.
179.	Theon	councillor, convoyer of collectors of barley	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1415 (late 3rd cent.)	In the text, he has fled from his duty as convoyer. The use of υἱοῦ might indicate his father (whose name and titles are lost) was a magistrate as well.
180.	Aur. Theon?	agoranomos, councillor, bibliophylax	*P.Oxy.* 19 (1948) 2231 (241)	Name restored, but restoration virtually unavoidable.
181.	Aur. Theon	high priest, councillor, epimeletes of a fort	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1252 R° 2 (after 294/295)	
182.	Aur. Theon	agoranomos, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3171 (225-250)	Poss. identical with Aur. Theon, agoranomos in *P.Oxy.* 14 (1920) 1709 (224)

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
183.	Aur. Theon (*P.Oxy.* 3606) Aur. Theon s. of Aristion s. of Tiron and Sarapous-Demetria (*P.Oxy.* 2473)	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 27 (1962) 2473 (229) *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3606 (ca 230-235)	Brother of Aur. Aristion, high priest, councillor, who has at least two children: Aur. Theon-Eudaimon surnamed Aristion and Sarapous-Agathokleia.
184.	Aur. Theon s. of Didymos	exegetes, councillor, public banker	*Z.P.E.* 133 (2000) 169-173 (254)	
185.	Aur. Theon s. of Sarapion s. of Sarapion (*P.Oxy.* 3289) Aur. Theon s. of Sarapion (*P.Oxy.* 3293	exegetes, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 3289) president (*P.Oxy.* 3293)	*P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3289 (258/259) *P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3293 (262-265)	President in office in *P.Oxy.* 3293. His brothers are Aur. Theoneinos-Sarapion, high priest, exegetes, councillor, and, later, president and Ammonios (without offices). Their father Sarapion s. of Sarapion, exegetes, is deceased by the time of *P.Oxy.* 3289. The identification of the two Theones was proposed in *P.Hamb.* 4 (1998) p.345 no. 172; note further that his brother prob. also reached the presidency.
186.	Aur. Theon s. of Theon	kosmetes, councillor	*S.B.* 5 (1934-1955) 7814 (256)	Theon is Antinoite citizen. He is prob. identical with Aur. Theon s. of Theon, Antinoite of the Sebasteian tribe and Dioskoureian deme in *P.Oxy.* 8 (1911) 1119 (253); a brother is named Aur. Arsinoos and belongs to the same tribe and deme.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
187.	Theon-Ammonios	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2584 (211)	Gen. of name father is ....]γος. Poss. identical with and prob. related to Aur. Theon-Ammonios, eutheniarch, agoranomos, councillor of Alexandria in *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3131 (ca 218-225). There, a son is mentioned: Aur. Theon-Zoilos, gymnasiarch. The latter is poss. identical with Theon-Zoilos, gymnasiarch in *P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 111 (235). Aur. Zoilos s. of Theon, gymnasiarch, councillor may be a relative. The other identifications made in *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3113 (ca 264/265) 2n. are unconvincing.
188.	Aur. Theon-Maximos	gymnasiarch, president and director of municipal finance (*P.Oxy.* 3244) president (*P.Oxy.* 3606)	*P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3244 (228) *P.Oxy.* 51 (1984) 3606 (ca 230-235)	President in office in the later part of 228/229 and in 229/230.
189.	Aur. Theon-Mounatios	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 59 (1992) 3978 (249/250)	Prob. related to Aur. Mounatios, agoranomos, exegetes, gymnasiarch, councillor, president, though unlikely to be identical.
190.	Aur. Theon-Origines (*P.S.I.* 1249) Theon-Origenes s. of Chairemon(?) (*P.Oxy.* 1413)	gymnasiarch, councillor (*P.S.I.* 1249) - (*P.Oxy.* 1413)	*P.S.I.* 12 (1951) 1249 (265) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1413 (272)	Appearing as speaker in the council meeting of *P.Oxy.* 1413, hence almost certainly councillor. In that text, one or more offices prob. lurk behind ‘and however he is styled’. Married to a woman named Didyme-Antiocheia, daughter of Hierax-Sarapion, gymnasiarch, president, councillor.

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
191.	Aur. Theon-Ploutarchos	gymnasiarch, councillor, in charge of the epikrisis (*P.Turner* 38) councillor, in charge of the epikrisis (*S.B.* 15626)	*P.Turner* (1981) 38 (274/5 or 280/281) *S.B.* 22 (2001) 15626 (276-282(?))	In *S.B.* 15626 the gymnasiarchy may have disappeared in a lacuna. In *P.Turner* 38 line 1 supply Θέωνι. It is unfortunate that the name of the colleague has not survived in *S.B.* 15626; both texts may date from the same term of office. Prob. related to and poss. identical with Theon-Ploutarchos, hypomnematographos and strategos of the Thanite nome in *P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1257 (after 279).
192.	Aur. Theoneinos-Sarapion s. of Sarapion s. of Sarapion	high priest, exegetes, councillor (*P.Oxy.* 3289) president (*P.Oxy.* 1515)	*P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3289 (258/259) *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1515 (after 258/259)	President in office at the time of *P.Oxy.* 1515. His father Sarapion, s. of Sarapion exegetes, is deceased at the time of *P.Oxy.* 3289. His brothers are Aur. Theon, exegetes, councillor, and, later, president and Ammonios. The fact that his brother prob. also reached the presidency adds some force to the identification.
193.	Aur. Thonis	magistrate, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3188 (300)	
194.	Thonis	exegetes, councillor, public banker	*P.Oxy.* 20 (1952) 2271 (mid 3rd cent.)	
195.	Aur. Thonis	councillor	*P.Princ.* 2 (1936) 50 (255)	Epitropos of the ousia Ptolemais.
196.	Aur. Thonis-Theagenes	exegetes, councillor, epimeletes of a fort	*P.Oxy.* 10 (1914) 1252 R° 2 (after 294/295)	Prob. identical with Aur. Thonios-Theogenes, exegetes in *P.Oxy.* 45 (1977) 3246 (298), though note the variation in the spelling of the name.
197.	Aur. Zoilos s. of Theon	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 41 (1972) 2998 (late 3rd cent.)	Poss related to Aur. Theon-Ammonios, eutheniarch, agoranomos, councillor of Alexandria and his son Aur. Theon-Zoilos, gymnasiarch in *P.Oxy.* 43 (1975) 3131 (ca 218-225).

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
198.	Aur. Zoilos s. of Zoilos	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.S.I.* 13 (1949-1953) 1330 (after March 272)	
199.	]des-Diogenes	(-)	*P.Oxy.* 24 (1957) 2417 (after Nov. 286)	Prob. appearing as speaker in a council meeting, hence prob. councillor. Length of first name unknown. Offices may be lost in lacuna.
200.	...des-Seleukos	councillor	*P.Oxy.* 50 (1983) 3563 (225-230)	
201.	Aur. ....ios	councillor	*S.B.* 14 (1981-1983) 12158 (bef. 264 (?))	
202.	....nios-Sara(pion?)	kosmetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 40 (1972) 2935 (ca 268-271)	Maternal grandfather of a recipient in the corn dole: A........., s. of Sarapion, s. of Horion, mother Sarallion(?)
203.	Aur. N.N.-Ploutarchos	gymnasiarch, president	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300)	Former president at the time of the document. The possible identifications canvassed in the ed. have little to commend themselves.
204.	Aur. N.N.-Ptolemaios	gymnasiarch, president	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3182 (257)	President in office in 256/257.
205.	Aur. N.N.(?)-Ptolemaios	councillor	*S.B.* 20 (1997) 14290 (3rd cent.)	Ptolemaios might also be first name, without further alias. N.N.(?)-Ptolemaios has Antinoite citizenship.
206.	N.N. s. of Demetrios	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oslo* 3 (1936) 158 (late 3rd cent.)	More offices may be lost in a lacuna.
207.	N.N.	gymnasiarch, councillor	*S.B.* 16 (1985-1988) 13063 (212-269)[11]	

[11] Unrelated to the present list, read (despite the comments in the ed.pr.) in line 8 ἄρχοντος, the gen. of 'magistrate', not Ἄρχοντος, 'son of Archon', cf. *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1406 (213-217) 11-12n with discussion and further refs., *P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3188 (300).

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
208.	N.N.	councillor, keeper of the peace	*P.Turner* (1981) 42 (3rd cent., after 212)	Councillorship uncertain but likely. *H.G.V.* dates '3rd cent.'
209.	N.N.	(high?) priest, exegetes, councillor	*B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1070 (218)	
210.	N.N.	gymnasiarch(?), councillor	*P.Oxy.* 47 (1980) 3348 (228-232)	Oxyrhynchite origin not certain but likely. Father of a daughter named Aur. Kle...(?).
211.	N.N.	president	*P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1418 (247)	President in office 247/248. More offices may be lost in a lacuna.
212.	Aur. N.N.	councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*P.Oxy.* 18 (1941) 2186 (260)	Name and offices lost in lacuna.
213.	Aur. N.N.	councillor, in charge of the epikrisis	*S.B.* 22 (2001) 15626 (276-282(?))	Poss. identical with Aur. Sekoundos-Apollonios.
214.	N.N.	councillor	*B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1093 (265)	The name reads in the genetive [........]υ.
215.	N.N.	exegetes, councillor	*B.G.U.* 4 (1912) 1093 (265)	The name reads in the genetive ....]ενους, hence poss. Diogenes.
216.	N.N.	exegetes of Alexandria, gymnasiarch, councillor, president	*P.Fouad* 1 (1939) 52 (after March, 272)	Other Alexandrian offices are lost in a lacuna. President in office at the time of the document. Poss. identical with Aur. Euporos-Agathodaimon, exegetes etc. of Alexandria, exegetes, president etc. of Oxyrhynchos.
217.	N.N.	scribe	*P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1191 (280)	
218.	N.N.	exegetes of Oxyrhynchos and the Small Oasis, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 6 (1908) 888 (after Oct. 287)	

NUMBER	NAME	MAGISTRACIES, LITURGIES AND COUNCILLORSHIP	SOURCES	REMARKS
219.	N.N.	exegetes, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 9 (1912) 1205 (291)	Father of at least one daughter, she has a half-brother (or half-sister) of the same mother. All names are lost in lacunae.
220.	N.N.	gymnasiarch, councillor	*P.Oxy.* 46 (1978) 3296 (291)	N.N. has Antinoite citizenship. He is either the father of a deceased woman named Stratonike (with poss. missing alias-name), or the representative of her heirs, in which case his name could be Saras. They are poss. identical with and prob. related to Aur. Stratonike-Sosipatra, and her father M.Aur. Saras, gymnasiarch, councillor.
221.	N.N.	president, gymnasiarch, councillor (?), president (?)	*P.Stras.* 4 (1963) 261 (296)	Reading and interpretation of the titles are uncertain. Prob. father of N.N.-Apollonios. Poss. president at the time of the document.
222.	N.N.	syndikos	*P.Oxy.* 44 (1976) 3187 (300)	Appearing as a speaker in a council meeting, hence almost certainly councillor.
223.	Aur. N.N.	councillor, president	*P.Oxy.* 31 (1966) 2610 (late 3rd cent.)	President in office at the time of the document.

CONVENTIONS

The best general introductions to the society of Roman Egypt are Bowman (1996^2) and Bagnall (1993)—the importance of the latter extending beyond the Late Antique period. Both books also contain useful appendices on technical details.

In Roman Egypt land was measured in arouras. 1 aroura = 2,756 m^2.

Dates are A.D. unless otherwise stated.

Editions of inscriptions should be consulted together with the relevant entries in the annually appearing *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum,* which also contains a list of abbreviations. For convenience, I have added the year of publication to the references. An abbreviation such as *I.Alex.* (1994) 39 (172-175) refers to *Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines (non funéraires) d'Alexandrie impériale (Ier-IIIe s. apr. J.-C.)*, published in 1994, text number 39, dating to 172-175.

Papyri and ostraca are abbreviated according to the conventions of J.F. Oates e.a., *Checklist of Documentary Papyri*, appearing in printed form in supplements of *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*, but also with regular updates available on the internet, currently at http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html. Editions are cited according to the principles of the *Berichtigungsliste der griechischen Papyrusurkunden aus Ägypten (B.L.)*, which means that for each text one central reference is given, even if the text has been edited more than once. Reeditions and textual improvements are catalogued in *B.L.*, which therefore should be consulted alongside each edition. For convenience, I have again added the year of publication to the references. The abbreviation *P.Oxy.* 12 (1916) 1406 (213-217) refers to the twelfth volume of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, published in 1916, text number 1406 dating to 213-217. Unless otherwise stated the dates are those of the *Heidelberger Gesammtverzeichnis* (*H.G.V.*), which currently can be consulted at http://www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de/~gv0/gvz.html.

In general, I have preferred to cite texts that are well-edited and do not present textual problems that would distract too much from the argument. Given the fact that third-century evidence from Oxyrhynchos is abundant and well-edited, this inevitably creates a bias towards Oxyrhynchos.

Modern literature is cited by author-date. The only exception is formed by works that are cited only once or works whose relevance is limited to a specific technical point. These have been cited in full in the footnotes and are not mentioned in the bibliography. In an attempt to keep footnotes within reasonable limits, preference has usually been given to recent publications, on the grounds that the older literature can be retraced through the newer works.

Anyone writing a book on a Greek-language society will be familiar with the problem of spelling personal and geographical names. Should they be Latinised or not? As this is a book on local elites whose acquaintance with Latin was in most cases remote, I have chosen to write all names (except those of emperors) in Hellenised form. This has some odd consequences, but it has at least the merit of consistency. My apologies to the heirs of the veteran Vibios Poublios of *P.Oxy*. 14 (1920) 1646 (268 and 270).

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